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[THE PEDLAR.]

FICKLE FORTUNE.

By the Author of "Maurice Durant," etc.

CHAPTER III.

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share;
Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye,
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.

Smollett.

It would take three days of good walking to reach London, and how he was to exist during those three days was an enigma to Hugh.

He had left his watch, chain, and other jewellery upon the dressing-table of his bed-room, and had emptied his pockets of every copper.

The only thing they contained indeed was a knife—useful piece of cutlery enough, but utterly worthless as an article of food—and a small gold pencil-case, which had been a gift of one of his school-fellows.

At the end of five miles he came upon an outlying farm, where he was well known.

He had hoped to pass unnoticed and unrecognized, but the woman of the house happened to come to the door with a pan of milk, and, seeing him, gave him "Good-even."

Nodding with a smile he strode on, but she called after him, and, when he turned back, offered him a drink of milk, saying respectfully that it was a warm night, and he had far to go—thinking he was making a circuit of home.

He was very thirsty, but his pride would not allow him to accept the refreshing draught, for he argued that the milk was offered to Hugh the heir to Dale House, and not to Hugh the outcast, and walked on thirstier for the sight of it.

At nightfall he had walked twelve miles, and looked round for a resting-place.

In a field there stood a haystack and a tumble-down barn. Between the two he threw himself down, lying in the shadow of the hay, and, though his heart was heavy and his brain busy with sad thoughts he soon fell asleep.

He awoke in the morning, not very much refreshed,

but, finding a stream at the end of the field, threw off his clothes and plunged in.

The bath freshened him, but gave him a tremendous appetite, a most unfortunate gift, considering he saw no chance of getting a breakfast.

However, he was young and wonderfully strong, and by feeding on his pride darted off again.

At noon, when the sun grew broiling hot, and he had left the Dale many miles behind him, he felt faint, and almost powerless to proceed, and, very sick at heart, for your empty stomach is a dreadful Old Man of the Sea, flung himself down under a tree.

A man's footsteps awoke him from an uneasy doze, and starting to his feet he saw an old pedlar, whose nose proclaimed him an Israelite, standing looking at him.

"Can I sell you a nicest brooch for the young ladies?" he asked, with an insinuating smile.

Hugh shook his head, but the Jew, who never took the first refusal on principle, unsling his pack, and, kneeling down, displayed his stock in trade.

A metal pencil-case lying among the heap of trinkets gave Hugh an idea.

"Is that silver?" he asked.

The Jew hesitated and was lost.

"It's ash good ash shilver, my tear," he replied.

"What's the price?" asked Hugh.

"Ten shillings," said the Jew, taking it up and turning it over with a wonderful look of admiration in his bloodshot eyes.

"Ten shillings?" said Hugh, made sharp already by his poverty—your ablest schoolmaster. "What would a silver one be worth, then?"

"Eh?—oh, fifteen, my tear."

"And a gold one?" continued Hugh.

The Jew lifted his thick eyebrows.

"I'm sorry I haven't got a gold one," he replied, looking heart-broken.

"Yes, but what would it be worth?" said Hugh.

"Twenty shillings," replied the Jew, "a good one."

"Ah," said Hugh, pulling his out of his pocket.

"What will you give me for that?"

The Jew's long claws seized it at once, Hugh putting his hands behind him, for fear the Jew's dirty talons should touch him, and leaning against the tree. "It is n't gold," said the Jew, with an affectation of disdain.

"Yes, it is," said Hugh, "and you know it."

The Jew looked at it again more closely.

"It isn't a good one," he said, this time with a decision that nearly deceived Hugh.

"Is it not?" he said. "Well, what will you give me for it?"

The Jew looked at him keenly.

"Where did you get it from?" he said.

"That's no business of yours," retorted Hugh, sternly.

"Well, well, well, don't be in a passion, my tear," said the pedlar. "I'll give you ten shillings for it and ask no questions."

"You said it was worth twenty a minute since," said Hugh, eying him sternly.

"Yesh, yesh," whined the Jew, "but wheresh is my profit to come from—my little profit? Besides, how do I know you didn't steal it, my tear?"

Hugh smiled gaily.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

The Jew pointed with his pencil towards Dale.

"Shall you try and sell it there?" Hugh asked.

The Jew looked at him with a knowing leer.

"No, no," he said. "I understand, that's where you found him—oh, my tear? Well, there, I'll give you half a sovereign, and chance how you came by him."

This was what Hugh wanted.

So stipulating that the old villian should not show it at Dale, where every soul would recognize it as his—Master Hugh's—he took the ten shillings from the man's dirty claws and went on his way.

Hugh knew that there were no hay-stacks in London and that lodgings must be paid for, so he determined to proceed economically.

At the next ale-house, which stood on a hill about a mile from his recent resting-place, he had a crust of bread and cheese and a glass of ale.

Until then he had no idea that bread and cheese and ale had such a delicate and delicious flavour.

No emperor's state banquet was ever so much enjoyed.

Another man in spirits and vigour, he resumed his march, and—not to weary the reader by a repetition of hay-stacks and bread and cheese—entered London from the west on the evening of the third day.

Sixty or seventy years ago there were no such facilities for travelling as we lucky or unlucky people of the present days possess, and Hugh, though the son of a wealthy sire, had not seen the metropolis before.

It wanted half an hour to the grand dinner-time of seven as he turned in at the Marble Arch, drawn as by a loadstone by the string of horses and carriages, for Hugh loved horses, and even with a heaving heart and the misery of a vanished home and an uncertain future ever before him, could not resist the temptation of leaning against the iron railings and watching the procession of riders mounted on the finest cattle in Europe, for whatever else was behind the world English came second in we take the lead in horsemanship.

After this rest he walked down Piccadilly and through the busy streets until towards night he reached the humble thoroughfare of the Strand.

At a coffee shop which looked clean yet unpretending, and which bore the legend "Red" in a corner of its window, he engaged a room for the night, feeling half confused by the great city and its noises.

In the morning he breakfasted on a cup of coffee, and a huge crust, thinly smeared with an oily substance set down on the bill as butter, and strolled out to think on a plan of action.

Like all men whose knowledge of the world is bounded by a country village, Hugh had looked upon London as the golden Eldorado in which one had but to set one's foot and find employment and a fortune; but when he had reached it he was confounded by its magnitude and saw no way to turn.

He knew no craft save that of a farmer, had no friends, no letter of introduction.

What was he to do? As he asked himself this question he wandered on, utterly regardless of his whereabouts, until the spectacle of a huge wall, to which even the high walls round the Dale were paltriness, roused him from his reverie and set him making inquiries.

"This is the docks," replied a man dressed like a sailor on shore for a holiday.

"The docks?" said Hugh; "where the ships start from?"

"Yes," said the man. "Pretty nearly all of 'em. Which might you be lookin' for? The 'Mary Ann,' or the 'Neptune'?"

"I am not looking for either," said Hugh.

"Oh, beg your honour's pardoning," replied the sailor, taking a long strip of negrohead from his pocket and cutting a slice off with a large clasp-knife that hung suspended round his waist by a tarred rope. "I thought you was a-going in one o' the emigrants."

"The emigrants?" said Hugh, a sudden thought flashing through his brain. "Are there a number of emigrants going out in those two ships then?"

"Yes," said Jack. "The 'Neptune's' a-going to Australia and the 'Mary Ann' be going to the Cape."

"The Cape of Good Hope?" said Hugh.

"In course," retorted the sailor, staring at his ignorance; "there ain't no other as I knows on, leastways as is called 'Cape.'"

"Ah!" said Hugh, "and which now do you consider the best place for an emigrant, the Cape of Good Hope or Australia?"

"All depends," said Jack. "If you're going gold-hunting I should say Australia's the place, but if farmin' and cattle keepin' is the game I'd say steer clear to the Cape."

"Have you been to either of the places?" asked Hugh, his heart beating with a flush of the new hope.

"Have I been?" repeated Jack, stopping his munching to slap his thigh with astonishment.

"Well, that's a good 'un! This 'ere 'ull make my tenth to the Cape, please Heaven."

"And you like it?" said Hugh, almost ashamed to worry the man with any farther questions, yet anxious to gain all the information he could, for something whispered to him that he was standing at the cross roads of life and that a great deal depended upon the path he took.

"Like it," repeated Jack, "well, middlin'. The climate is fair enough, and the tackle ain't bad, but the Hottentots is pison."

"Hottentots!" said Hugh, whose knowledge of geography, as the reader will have discovered before now, was rather limited. "Are there black men there then?"

Jack nodded.

"There be," he said, concisely, "black as ink and cunning ones too."

"You don't seem to like the Hottentots," said Hugh, with a smile.

"I hate 'em," said the sailor, heartily. "They're as nasty a lot as ever was turned out—leastways most of 'em. They stole my bacca and a keg of the ship's stores last voyage, the thieves. Hottentots 'ull take the eyes out o' your head and grin in your teeth while they're doing it—silver my timbers if they won't!"

Hugh could not repress a smile, sad and earnest as his thoughts were; and, still wanting more information, he proposed that they should go over the way to a little low-browed public-house with a representation of an extremely lively-looking sailor in very clean white trousers hanging up over the door as a sign, and get something to moisten the hunk of tobacco, dirt and treacle in the corner of Jack's mouth.

With a quarter of old Jamaica before him Jack waxed friendly, and wound up a general summary on seamanship, with the advantages and disadvantages of a life on land—in which according to his view the disadvantages preponderated—by informing Hugh that the "Mary Ann" was only waiting for one or two able-bodied seamen to leave the docks, her cargo and passengers being ready stowed aboard.

Hugh thought for a moment, then surprised the sailor by suddenly asking him if he thought the captain of the "Mary Ann" would accept him in place of one of the missing men.

Jack looked him up and down and scratched his head.

"You come along to the skipper, my hearty, and hear what he says," he replied.

Hugh walked to the door at once, and, stopping only to finish the ale which Hugh had left, Jack rolled out after him.

The skipper of the "Mary Ann," a little man with a brown face and grey eyes that danced when he laughed like the waves he had so often traversed, after eyeing Hugh for a moment and rubbing his chin, told him he would do, and Hugh, agreeing to work his passage out to Cape Town, signed the name of "Laurence Harman" on the roll-book.

So Hugh Darrell the heir to the Dale existed no longer and from his ashes sprang Laurence Harman, seaman-emigrant on board the "Mary Ann," bound for the Cape of Good Hope, with "Ask for Starart's Corner" as his watchword and anchor-chest.

CHAPTER IV.

I will instruct my servants to be proud,
For grudge is proud, and makes his owner cheap.

Shakespeare.

For twenty minutes after Hugh had left the house Squire Darrell stood stern and motionless at the door through which the stubborn son had passed.

At the end of twenty minutes his frown relaxed and he commenced pacing the handsomely carpeted room, muttering:

"The impudent jackanapes! What is the world coming to, when one is to be hearded by the young scamps who owe you everything, even the very breath that—that—I wonder how long he'll wander up and down the village."

This was said more softly, for the squire had never a doubt that his stubborn son had been playing heroics, and that he would come in with the candles, perhaps a little sulky and obstinate still, yet safe at home.

But the candles came and no Hugh. Nay, the candles burnt down in their sockets and still the chair opposite the squire's, in which Hugh used to smoke his cigar or look over the county news sheet, remained empty.

There the squire sat and went through a battle, his pride warring against his natural affections, in which the latter, unused to being called upon, were utterly routed by the pride, which was always in arms.

At midnight the squire was white yet firm. He rang the bell until it clanged like a county alarm, and when the servant hurried to the room sternly ordered him to lock all the doors and get to bed.

The man, who was quite ignorant of the termination of the last quarrel between father and son, ventured to stammer that Mr. Hugh had not returned.

The squire brought down his fist upon the table with an exclamation.

"If you mention Hugh Darrell's name to me again, you rascal, I'll kick you out of doors after him," he roared, and the man, white and all excitement, hurried down to the kitchen with the news that Mr. Hugh had been turned out of doors, and that it would be more than any one's head was worth to even name him to the squire.

One of the village tradesmen happening to partake of cake and ale in the kitchen at the moment, hurried off to the village with the weighty news, and before morning the tenants and tradespeople had received their warning not to give the fatal name tongue if they valued their leases and the Dale custom.

All night the squire tossed about on his bed, and waited with that dreary hopefulness which grows at night for the sound of the gate bell, but no Hugh

came repentantly back to ring it, and he rose in the morning hardened to stone, and, now he had got over the first qualms of affection and remorse, as determined as a flint.

The squire did nothing by halves, and having disowned his son he set about removing all traces of his existence. Every article pertaining to Hugh—his old hats, walking-sticks, cigar cases, and odd nicknacks which strewed the mantel-shelves and corners were taken up to the room he had occupied, the door of which the squire himself not only locked but screwed up.

Having "done his duty" so far, he sat down to his old oak desk, and taking out the black-edged letter from his pocket, carefully spread it out before him.

It ran thus:

"Sir,—I have to inform you that Mrs. Betsy Darrell died here on the twenty-second instant, leaving behind her a daughter aged seventeen, and a sum of money amounting to two hundred pounds. As I have ascertained that you are her nearest relative I lose no time in informing you of her decease and respectfully requesting instructions for the disposal of the estate and Miss Grace Darrell, her daughter.

"Your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM LAWSON, Attorney."

After several minutes of profound reflection the squire, knitting his brows and taking up a pen awkwardly and gingerly—he already missed Hugh, who did all the correspondence and what accounts were necessary—wrote in reply:

"Sir,—Send the girl and the money to me, with your bill, by first conveyance."

"HARRY DARRELL."

This characteristic epistle he sealed and despatched, and then trudged round his fields as perfect a specimen of the human mule as any naturalist could desire.

Four days after the date of the squire's letter the stage-coach stopped at the Dale gate and a young girl was helped down from the seat of honour. This was Miss Grace Darrell.

The squire stood at the hall door, his face twitching with some strong, firmly suppressed emotion, and when she ran up the steps took her by the arm and kissed her, speaking never a word until, still holding her arm in a kindly grasp, they reached the drawing-room, then seating himself in his easy-chair he drew her in front of him and said:

"My girl, let me look at you."

He saw a graceful, strongly built young lady with a dark complexion, thick black eyebrows, eyes that had all the Darrell beauty and a mouth that had something more than the Darrell firmness about it.

The face was neither beautiful nor plain, but it attracted the squire.

"My girl," he said, rather huskily, "you are like your father."

Now, her father was the squire's younger brother, whom until he had made a runaway match with this girl's mother, an actress at a provincial theatre, the squire had loved as David loved Jonathan. When, however, he had committed this crime the elder brother, though it had cost him as much as it had to show his own son the door, cast him off for ever.

"My girl, you are like your father," he said.

The girl dropped her eyes from his face and sighed.

"I do not remember him, sir," she said.

"No, no," said the squire, nodding his head, then hastily, as if to hide the team that sprang to his eyes, he added, "There, you must be tired, you look dusty and knocked up, and no wonder either. Go with Mrs. Lucas, the housekeeper, to your room."

And kissing her again he half pushed, half led her to the middle-aged woman who acted in the capacity of housekeeper and general manager at the Dale.

Grace Darrell had been brought up in a small, out-of-the-way place in the north.

Education in the most advanced cities in those days was but meagre and unusual, so it is not to be wondered at if the girl, having no guardian but an invalid, broken-spirited mother, should be deficient in the few accomplishments and adornments of the time.

But her lack of accomplishments was somewhat made up by her inborn tact and good spirits, her naturally inquiring mind and a dauntless spirit and courage that though they led her into many scrapes and got her the reputation of a tom-boy kept her from being that insignificant thing, an uneducated, idle woman.

Grace, whatever else she lacked, did not want originality, as the squire soon found out, for at dinner, after a little encouragement, she chatted with the freedom of adolescence and old acquaintanceship.

"And is this the Dale, Uncle Darrell? You are my uncle, are you not?"

"Yes," said the squire, amused and somewhat flustered by the sudden title.

"It is a very beautiful place—very beautiful. Mr. Lucas says I may go off over it after dinner, that is if you will let me. Will you?"

"Yes," said the squire again; "and I'll go with you."

"That's a dear uncle," said the girl, going up to him and laying her hand upon his shoulder; then looking up suddenly, with a smile that was irresistible, "You will be very kind to me—won't you?"

"Yes," said the squire, adding as he read a half-dozen looks upon her face—"What makes you ask, my dear?"

"Because—" she commenced, then stopped.

"Go on," said the squire, drawing her closer to him. "Speak out, my dear; I like people who speak their minds."

And for the moment he thought she was speaking the truth.

"Because," said Grace,—"my mother told me you were cruel to poor father—"

She stopped as the squire's face darkened, and shrunk away a little, but the cloud disappeared and he said, as cheerily as he could:

"Never mind all that, my girl; I'll be good to you, and you must love me. Eh, that's a bargain?"

"Yes, yes," said Grace, with serious earnestness, flinging her arms round his neck. "That's a bargain. And now we'll go round," and she ran to the window.

The squire hadn't finished his wine, but he got his hat and with the girl hanging to his arm strode out of the house into the garden.

At almost every step Grace stopped to utter an exclamation of delight and childish glee, the squire's face puckering into a smile of pleasure, but relapsing into its half-sinister, half-sad expression at times.

When she reached the stable the girl liberally refused to budge another inch.

Her face lit up with delight and longing.

"Oh, uncle, what splendid horses! Oh, the darlings—oh, the dears! Oh, how I wish—"

"What?" said the squire; "are you fond of horses?"

"I love 'em," she replied, eagerly.

"Oh, oh," said the squire. "But you cannot ride?"

The girl gave a short laugh and sprang to the head of Hugh's horse, and looked back.

"Can't ride? Yes, I can. Oh, do let me!"

"But you haven't got a saddle," said the squire, rather staggered at her earnestness.

With the rapidity of thought she caught up a rug, folded it, and flung it across the horse's back.

"There is all the saddle I want," she said. "Do let me ride him across the field—only across the field and back again," she added, coaxingly, running to him and twining her arm within his.

It was useless to stand out against her, and the squire—pulling a rueful face as he thought of what the country-folks would say of his niece scampering across the four-acre on a bare-backed horse—gave her a lift up and stood to watch the result, not without sundry misgivings.

With a repetition of the short laugh, which rang rather unpleasantly like Hugh's for the squire, she turned the horse's head, and, with a touch of her hand, put him in a gallop across the field.

Calling himself an old idiot for letting the child break her neck, the squire ran after her as far as his gout would let him—then pulled up short with a stare of amazement.

She sat the horse like an Amazon, controlling him by the stall-bridle as easily as Hugh could have done it himself, and with a flushed face and a laugh of joy that was good to hear brought him back to where the squire stood.

"Bravo!" said the squire. "Pray where did you learn to ride, my fine madam?"

"Oh, I learnt myself," replied the girl, jumping down very close to the squire's weak leg, and patting the horse's back. "Oh, ain't he a beauty, uncle? But he ain't a lady's horse."

"How do you know?" asked the squire.

"By the way he gallops," replied the girl. "Is he yours, uncle?"

"No," said the squire, shortly.

"Whose is he, then?" she asked, lifting her head from where it had been nestling against the animal's back. "Uncle, you never told me, have you got a son?"

"No!" said the squire, dolefully. "I had, but—his dead!"

CHAPTER V.

Where is the man who has the power and skill to stem the torrent of a woman's will? For if she will she will, you may depend on it. And if she won't she won't, and there's an end on't.

Mr. a very few days Grace Darrell was mistress at the Dale.

The squire, who had hitherto ruled the roost in a most despotic way, found himself most utterly vanquished and put down. His will had to bow before the passionate fury of the young girl's as completely as an old shaky tree is swayed and bent double by the wind.

It was a new sensation this sudden submission, but the Squire of Dale did not altogether dislike it. Who could help loving the dark-eyed young gipsy who stamped her feet and dared you to your very face when you asked her to do anything she disliked or disapproved of, and then, when with a sigh you had owned yourself vanquished, threw her arms round your neck and poured a thousand endearments on your head? Certainly not the squire, much less Mrs. Lucas and the servants, who petted, caressed, and spoiled her to her young wilful heart's content—scarcely spoiled her though, for beneath all the obstinacy, wilfulness and high spirits there beat a true womanly heart that only required the slightest kindness and show of love to pour out its wealth of affection.

Mrs. Lucas had a sad time of it with young puss, but she loved her with all her matronly heart, and wiped away the tears she often shed for "Poor Master Hugh" when Grace came bounding down the stairs or rushing into the housekeeper's room.

This same bounding and rushing had been the cause of many scenes between her uncle and herself also. The squire was not used to being startled out of his life by a sudden entry or exit, and it made his old heart leap into his mouth to hear her jump eight of the wide stairs and alight at the bottom with a crash. Of course he complained rather crossly, but he met with ready response.

"Grace, my girl," he had expostulated, with a frown, as on the second morning she jumped up from the breakfast-table, upsetting the urn and scalding the cat, to see something from the window, "Grace, my girl, you must not leap about like that. Look here, you've played the daisy with the breakfast things."

"Oh, so I have. There's a mess. What'll Mrs. Lucas say, unky?" and she burst into a merry peal of laughter and stood regarding the wrathful out and overturned urn with intense enjoyment.

This was rather calculated to make the squire angry, but he kept his wrath down as he had never done with Hugh, and, trying a different tack, said: "Don't laugh, my girl. I can't have you playing the harum-scarum like this here. You'll frighten me into my grave before a month's out."

Instantly the laugh ceased and the twinkling eyes became sad ones.

"Oh, unky, I didn't mean it. Don't you be cross," she said, repentantly, and threw her arms round his neck.

This completely settled the squire, who kissed her and sent her back to her seat, after extracting a promise of greater caution and quietness. But before the day had passed she had been found in some other mischief, and the squire, really angry on this occasion, had commanded her to Mrs. Lucas with instructions to keep out of the dining-room for the rest of the day. But at dinner time she had appeared as usual, and met the squire's surprised frown with a most decided one in return.

"I thought I told you, Miss Impudence, to stay in the housekeeper's room," he said.

"I don't like the housekeeper's room; I hate it. I like to be with you."

"But I won't have you if you don't behave yourself," said the squire. "Will you promise?"

No, she would not. She would do nothing but stand in front of him with firm, not to say obstinate eyes and knitted brows.

"Well, if you won't promise, I shall send you down again," he said.

"Then I won't go," said she.

The squire, with a sigh, rang the bell, and Mrs. Lucas, who knew pretty well what the squire wanted, appeared.

"Here, Mrs. Lucas, take Grace downstairs," said the squire, not half meaning what he said, but feeling that he was losing ground, and determined not to be beaten.

Mrs. Lucas came forward, but my lady darted off and stood at the other end of the table with a very unladylike but not altogether unbecoming smile of daring.

Mrs. Lucas, who was not so young as she had been, toddled after her. Grace, with the speed of a young deer, just changed sides.

The housekeeper, patting, kept up the pursuit, never being anywhere near her young charge, who had forgotten in the enjoyment of the chase the primary cause of it, and was in the midst of her glory in designing the painting old lady round the huge table.

It was too comical for the squire, who burst into a laugh and, of course, lost the battle, for Grace made a rush at him, and, clinging to his heart, declared nothing should tear her away.

"Well," said the squire, utterly routed, "let the young hussy stay, ma'am."

This will serve as a specimen of the battles that were fought daily between the squire and his adopted niece.

After she had been there a month the squire, who was getting more fond of her than he would have owned, began to think of sending to London for some masters for her, Grace being, as he once intimated, as innocent and uneducated as a child.

Besides, now the squire had given up all hopes of Hugh's return, he had begun to look upon this wild tom-boy of a girl as the heiress to the Dale, and his pride made him anxious that she should be made fit for the honour; added to which, although at present Mrs. Lucas and he had managed to keep her within the Dale grounds, the country neighbours were beginning to express themselves curious to see the girl who had supplanted Hugh, and the squire did not choose that my Lady Hastings and Sir Charles Bowden should see the heiress to the Dale in her present rough and uncultivated state.

He had not taken so much concern for his son's education, but then, in those days, a man who could boast of "book-learning" was thought to be rather at a disadvantage than otherwise, while the women were expected to play a little, sing a little and know a little of most things. Grace could neither sing nor play, and knew nothing. So a couple of masters came down to teach her—at least that was their avowed intention; Miss Grace had other ideas.

"Throw learning to the dogs, she'd none of it."

The two pedagogue trotted to the squire with piteous look and accent. They could do nothing with her.

The squire as usual commenced by being wrathful. "Ay, my men, you don't know how to manage her," and he stamped off to the room which had been set apart as a school-room.

Here they found her seated on a stool, looking dejected but beautiful, her rich hair falling in a grand, darkly coloured mass, her thick eyebrows knitted as tightly and obstinately as the squire's.

"Now, madam," his usual form of address on these occasions, "what's this I hear? Won't ye learn yer books?"

"No, I won't," said Grace. "I hate 'em." And she threw a "Guy's Catechism of Useful Knowledge" at the first place, the unfortunate tutor meekly picking it up.

"D'ye mean to tell me you won't do your lessons?" repeated the squire.

Grace nodded.

"Hem," said the squire. "Very well, my fine madam. Mr. Tompkins, don't trouble with her again."

This was a marvellous let-off Grace thought; but in the afternoon she read the riddle.

Two days before she had seen a cream-coloured pony rearing about the road in front of the Dale. At once she coveted it and worried the squire to get it for her.

The spirited little animal belonged to a tenant, and the squire, knowing that he could buy it, though he also knew he should have to pay a fancy price, promised her she should have it.

This afternoon Grace said:

"Uncle Harry, you said you would buy me that pony—have you got him yet? I do so want him!"

"Do you?" said the squire, nodding his head. "I wish you may get him, my girl."

"Why, uncle!" cried Grace, "you promised—oh, you won't break your word—oh, oh, oh!"

"You want the pony, do you?" asked the squire. The girl's flashing eyes answered him enough.

"Well, you see," said the squire, "we can't have everything we want. Now I wanted you to learn your books, and you promised like a good girl, but—"

"Oh," interrupted Grace, stamping her foot. "But I hate 'em; I didn't think they were so nasty."

"And I didn't think the pony'd cost so much money, my lass," retorted the squire.

Grace saw that she was beaten, but would not cry "enough" yet, and retired to the corner of the room to sit and ponder.

She held out till bed-time, then when Mrs. Lucas appeared with the candles she went to kiss her uncle and whispered, rather reluctantly though:

"Uncle, I'll learn my lessons, only, do do buy me the pony."

She kept her word too, and for one week harassed herself almost to death over grammar, arithmetic and the "polite languages," but they could do nothing much with her.

"I hate French and arithmetic and—oh, the whole lot of 'em," she said to her uncle, nodding her head decisively—"and I won't learn 'em."

But she read eagerly all the old books of travels she could get hold of and anything relating to adventures or the chase.

There was an old book called "The Wild Sports of the Savage World" that she knew almost by heart and from which she would repeat passages to the squire—who stood them with a wonderful patience—with eyes all ablaze and lips set apart with the fire that filled her soul.

As to the music the poor tutor thought he should be rather more fortunate than the other, but, alas, a few days' trial decided the squire to send the masters back to town and take Miss Grace in the rough as she was.

Had Squire Darrell, of Dale, displayed half the patience with poor Hugh that he had practised with the fiery, wilful girl there would have been a lighter heart in his breast and no such name as "Laurence Harman" on the roll-book of the "Mary Ann."

The squire had had a lesson and it had done him good.

Two months having passed since Grace's arrival, the squire one fine morning determined to take her round on a visit of introduction.

The Warren, as Miss Rebecca Goodman's was called, was the first on the list.

The squire had not seen Rebecca since Hugh's departure; he had felt too sore as yet to look upon the woman who had unintentionally caused the separation, but he was now glad of the excuse for calling on her.

Miss Rebecca Goodman, who was with all the rest of the people of the place rather afraid of the squire, received them rather uneasily. She was a slight, pale little woman with timid, frightened eyes and a manner at once conciliating and gentle—a good little being, but not the woman to win the heart of such a man as Hugh.

"So this is Miss Grace," she said, stooping to kiss that young lady, who took the caress rather frigidly, and stared about her with her dark eyes in a curious manner.

"Yes, Rebecca," said the squire, with something like a smothered sigh, "this is my niece." Then, turning to Grace, who was now scrutinizing the pale face before her with unblushing minuteness, "This lady is a great friend of mine. You must love her."

"Perhaps she won't love me," said Grace, rather pertinently.

"Oh, yes, I will, my dear," said Miss Rebecca, very much startled, and taking her hand. "We shall be very great friends, squire, I have no doubt."

"Hem!" said the squire, in his short way, feeling rather doubtful for his part of any one being able to stand Grace except himself.

"How is the gout?" asked Rebecca.

"Pretty well, I thank you," said the squire—his usual answer. "I hope your cold is better?"

"Thank you, yes," replied Miss Rebecca—her usual answer, likewise.

"Well," said the squire, after a little more small talk of a very broken sort, for both were thinking of the forbidden topic, "we must be going. Come, Grace."

But Grace had taken up her position at the table, and, without lifting her eyes from a large book of illustrated travels, refused to go.

"I don't want to go, Uncle Harry," she said, quietly. "I'd rather stay here."

The squire sighed. He didn't want to fight the usual battle before Rebecca.

"But you don't know whether the lady will have you," he said.

Grace looked up into the timid face of Rebecca and answered, confidently:

"Oh, yes, she will, Uncle Harry. Won't you?"

"Yes, my dear," said Miss Rebecca. "Let her stay the day with me, squire."

"But I wanted to take her to the Branstons' and her ladyship's."

"I won't go," said Grace, in parenthesis.

"Take her to-morrow," said Rebecca, and the squire, very much put out, trudged away without her.

When he had gone Miss Rebecca walked up to Grace, and, patting her arm in a feeble, timid sort of way, that the young girl quite appreciated, said:

"Well, my dear, do you like pictures?"

"Some of 'em," said Grace. "These are rare fine ones."

Miss Rebecca was shocked.

"You—you shouldn't say that," she said.

"What?" asked Grace, looking up with a frown of astonishment.

Miss Rebecca, who had not seen her face to so much advantage before, stopped in her intended reproof and looked away with a sigh. The dark frown was too much like Hugh's for the poor thing's equanimity.

"What's the matter?" said Grace, upon whom nothing, not the most fleeting expression, was lost.

"What did you sigh for? Did I say anything wicked? because I always am—so Mr. Dowlop says."

"Who is Mr. Dowlop?" asked Rebecca, avoiding her question.

"He's the tutor. He's gone now. I'm glad of it. I hated him."

"Hush!" said Rebecca. "You mustn't say that. It's very wicked to hate any one."

"But I can't help it," said Grace, nodding her head decidedly. "It ain't wicked if you can't help it. I hate everybody a most."

"Oh, that's very wicked!" said Rebecca, feeling a sort of womanly pity for the poor, untaught child. "Suppose every one hated you; how miserable you would be!"

"So they do!" said Grace. "Mr. Dowlop hated me—I'm sure he did—the folks down where we lived hated me and they called me tom-boy. Mrs. Lucas—well, she'll hate me in time. Oh, everybody hates me!"

"What, the squire?" asked Miss Rebecca, gently. "Think, Grace; your uncle does not hate you, and I, I don't hate you."

"Don't you?" said Grace. "Well, I like you for that."

"Oh, you don't hate me?" said Rebecca, smiling, but so sadly and mournfully that Grace turning from her beloved picture-book kissed her and then with a frown said:

"What makes you look so sad? Has your mother died?"

"Yes," said Rebecca, flushing, "but long, long ago."

"And your father?" asked Grace, drawing a little closer.

"Yes, he is dead," said Rebecca, quietly.

"My father and mother are dead too," said Grace, dropping her eyes thoughtfully, and drawing nearer to Rebecca. "Haven't you any brothers and sisters?"

"No," said Rebecca.

"Are you all alone in this big house?" asked Grace, opening her eyes.

"Yes," said Rebecca, who had never felt her loneliness more than at this moment.

"Ah," said Grace, "you must be dull at times, but you've got some nice picture books," and, evidently thinking that they went far to compensate, turned to the book again.

Rebecca rose, and going to a large cabinet took from it a pile of books.

"Here," said she, "are some more. You may have them all if you like."

Grace pounced upon them eagerly, but turned away after a slight examination with an air of contempt.

"They're all rubbish," she said; "there ain't a travel-book among 'em. I like travels and adventures, fights and huntings. Oh," she continued,

"I'd give anything to see all the fine countries in this book"—striking the book with her little clenched fist and lifting her head eagerly—"I'd give the world to see a lion and a tiger and an elephant. Wouldn't you? But I never shall," she continued before Rebecca could reply; "I never shall. Only boys and men go to them out-of-the-way places. No girls do. I hate girls! I'd like to be a boy. Oh, I'd like to be a boy!"

Miss Rebecca looked more shocked than ever.

"My dear! my dear!" she exclaimed.

"But I should! I should," repeated Grace, stamping her feet and raising her flashing eyes undauntedly. "I'd give everything to be a man and do as I like. I'd leave the Dale and take ship for foreign places; I'd work my heart out to fight a lion and build a house in the forest; I'd like to live like Robinson Crusoe on an island all by myself and fight the savages and—and—Oh, I wish I was a boy. Boys can do everything. Girls can do nothing. Don't you wish you was a boy, ma'am?"

Rebecca shook her head.

"No, my dear," she said; "they have their troubles as well as women," and she thought of the poor outcast wandering she knew not where.

The reply was beyond Grace and she returned to her book, Rebecca sitting beside her and answering to the best of her ability the torrent of questions that Grace poured out upon her.

Presently the book was exhausted, and Grace looked around for farther amusement.

Rebecca, responding to the look, rose and went to the piano.

"Can you play, my dear?" she asked Grace.

"No," said Grace, emphatically.

"That is a pity," said Rebecca.

"Why?" asked Grace, opening her eyes.

"Why?" repeated Rebecca, rather nonplussed.

"Why—don't you like music, my dear?"

"I don't know," said Grace.

And it was the truth, for the unfortunate man who had attempted to teach her music had utterly neglected to arouse her love for it by playing to her.

Rebecca commenced playing, and Grace, resting her elbows on the piano, leaned her head upon her hands and fixed her large eyes upon the lady's pale face.

Rebecca was fond of music and played well.

"Go on," said Grace, imperatively, as, after playing one of Mozart's sonatas, Rebecca paused.

Smiling at the tone of the request, she opened a collection of simple ballads, and sang one—a pathetic old thing that had been a favourite of Hugh's, who could always be got to listen to it when other things charmed in vain.

Rebecca, who had not a powerful or particularly good voice, sang well enough to enrapture this uncultivated specimen of humanity.

When she had finished Grace remained silent for a moment, then burst into tears.

This unexpected turn dismayed simple-minded Rebecca.

"Oh, my dear," she commenced, rising, and drawing the child towards her, but Grace did not like to be pitied and stamped her foot.

"Go on!" she cried, drying her tears and frowning. "I'm not crying. Why don't you go on? I like it. I like it."

Rebecca, as much afraid of her passion as alarmed at her tears, turned over the book and, thinking to please the singular girl, handed it to her, saying:

"There, my dear, choose a song for yourself."

Grace, though she knew not a note of music, took the volume gravely, and commenced reading the titles.

Presently she stopped and uttered a sudden exclamation, pointing to the name "Hugh Darrell," written on the top of one of the songs. It was one he had bought, and in a fit of good humour given to Rebecca, and as an additional favour had written his name across it.

Now as Grace pointed to it Rebecca turned rather pale and trembled.

She knew what the squire had told his niece, and also knew she would be expected to repeat the falsehood.

"Who's that?" asked Grace. "Hugh Darrell. That must be Uncle Harry's son. It is, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Rebecca.

"Did you know him?" asked Grace.

"Yes," again replied Rebecca, striking the keys with trembling hands.

"What was he like?" asked Grace. "How old was he? Was he good looking, strong and brave, as a man ought to be?"

"Yes," said poor Rebecca. "He was the handsomest man—boy—in Dale, the bravest and best in England."

"And he died," said Grace, thoughtfully. "Everybody seems to die that I like."

"But," said Rebecca, startled out of her tears, "you never saw him."

"No," said Grace—"course not, but I like him though. How long ago did he die?"

"Oh, long, long ago," said Rebecca, and, fearful lest another question should break the back of her endurance, she rose hastily, and, taking Grace's hand, said:

"Come, my dear, come, and let me show you the Warren."

(To be continued.)

THE ORGAN IN THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES.—The organ in the beautiful chapel in the Palace of Versailles, set up in 1737 by Alexandre Clicquot, has been entirely repaired, and enriched with all the improvements of modern art. The inauguration and trial took place recently. The instrument was highly approved of.

EXPORT OF CATTLE FROM ITALY TO FRANCE.—During the first nine months of the present year the number of head of cattle sent from Italy to France was as follows:—Bullocks, 40,630; cows, 23,400; calves, 8,000; sheep, 100,000; pigs, 46,000; showing a great increase on the exports from Italy during previous years. The greater part of the cattle is sent to France from Piedmont via the Col de Tenda, and the remainder principally from the island of Sardinia, where it is shipped for Marseilles. The increasing demand for live stock in France has tended to raise the price of meat in Italy.

MR. JOHN KELSO HUNTER, a self-taught artist and author, whose writings won the approbation of Mr. Carlyle, and were popular in the West of Scotland, recently died at Pollokshield, near Glasgow. He was born at Dunkeith, in Ayrshire, on December 15th, 1802. At 65 he published his first book, "The Retrospect of an Artist's Life." Acquainted in his youth with many who had known Robert Burns, Mr. Hunter embodied his recollection of these individuals in a volume entitled, "Life Studies of Character," published in 1870. This book threw much light on the works of Burns.

THE APPROACHING TRANSIT OF VENUS.—On Dec. 8, 1874, and again on Dec. 6, 1882, the planet Venus will cross the sun's face, and no like phenomenon will occur after 1882 until the year 2004. It chances, moreover, that in one respect the transit of 1874 presents an opportunity which will not recur during the transit of 1882, so that for 130 years astronomers will be without the means of remedying any omission which may be made in the case of the transit now near at hand. On this occasion, too, there will be an opportunity of making absolutely the most effective observations for the determination of the sun's distance possible during an interval of 235 years.



[YOU CAN KILL HER.]

THE MYSTERY OF FALKLAND TOWERS.

CHAPTER VIII.

Between the firm sands and the running sea
The quicksands stretch in shining treachery.
Rising and falling in long, tremulous waves,
They show no vestige of the hundred graves
Of ships and crews engulfed for ever more—
Perchance of treasures likewise; for the shore
Of old was haunted by the smuggling bands
Who fought and bled and died along the sands.

The Shipwreck.

THE road which led from Falkland Towers to Falkland village was very diversified for one so brief.

After quitting the great oaken avenue, which had been the chief pride and glory of the fine old park for generations, it skirted the marshes to the sea, and then kept along the shore until it reached the village, which was situated a little way from the coast.

The most remarkable feature of this portion of the road is the famous Romney Quicksands, the terror of sailors. When the tide is low they may be seen stretching many rods to seaward, and undulating with every breath of wind like mercury. These sands are the tomb of many ships and many lives, and a hundred ghostly legends surround them with a vague and lasting horror.

Lady Florence remembered some of the stories, which she had heard when a child, as, in her flight to Falkland village, she approached that portion of the road that led along the shore.

She was almost sure that she had not been observed.

It was bright moonlight, and she might easily have been discovered as she sped down the avenue, if any one had been on the look-out; but, notwithstanding the comparatively early hour of the evening, she was certain that she had been so cautious as to avoid suspicion.

It was low tide and the sea was calm and peaceful, but it looked inexpressibly lonely, and the quicksands gleamed so brightly and quivered so strangely that Lady Florence turned away with a shudder and pressed on with a rapid step.

But at one place the path ran along the very brink of the shuddering quicksands, and at this point Lady Florence started back with a sharp cry, for the dark figure of a man sprang suddenly from the underwood to the right, and stood in the very centre of her path.

He was heavily cloaked, and, to add to her terror, she perceived that his face was covered with a mask through which only his eyes could be seen, glaring at her with a glowering and baleful light.

She would have flown but he seized her by the wrist with the grip of a vice.

"Whither so late, my pretty one?" he cried, in a voice which sounded hollow and sepulchral through his metallic mask.

"Oh, let me go, let me go!" cried Florence, almost beside herself with terror. "I am only going to the village on an errand. Let me go! I have never harmed you."

"We'll see about that, pretty one. Have you any money about you?"

"Yes; here is my purse!" she exclaimed, handing it to him with trembling hand and trusting that he would be satisfied and leave her.

"You have a watch and chain," said the ruffian. Yes; she wore them even then, having assumed them more from force of habit than anything else; and they were a dearly loved keepsake—the gift of her dead father. But her terror overcame every other feeling.

"Yes, sir, here they are," she said, handing them to him. "Pray let me go now; I have nothing else that you can desire."

"Yes, you have, pretty one," said the hollow voice, with a hoarse, sepulchral laugh.

"Oh, what else can you want?" said poor Lady Florence, quivering like a leaf.

"Your life, Lady Florence Falkland!" exclaimed the ruffian, with frightful emphasis; and the next moment she was lifted in his strong arms, high above his shoulder, as easily as if she had been a feather.

"My hand shall not shed your blood, your fair skin shall not be marred by the slightest blow!" he exclaimed, while he held her aloft with the greatest ease. "But see you the sands that dimple and shudder at the slightest breeze? Great ships and their crews, fair lady, lie buried hundreds of fathoms for ever and ever in those shining depths, and I intend to cast you thither!"

She saw the terrible, treacherous sands quivering almost beneath her, and undulating far in the moonlight until they vanished beneath the waters of the sea; yet the very extremity of her peril seemed to inspire her with a little of the nerve which had before deserted her.

"What will you gain by my death?" she moaned.

"I will not tell any one that you have robbed me."

"Do you think I would kill you for fear of that?" laughed the ruffian. "No, no, my lady; there are others who, through your own stubbornness, not being able to profit by your life, will pay hugely for the assurance of your death. Lady Florence Falkland, look your last upon the sky, with its moon and stars, for your hour has come!"

She felt his grip tightening, and now shriek after

shriek burst from her horrified lips. She had never realized how sweet a boon was life before.

Sometimes in the mournful captivity of her sad and shrouded life she had thought that death would be preferable; but now, with those terrible sands shimmering and quivering under her, with that horrible, engulfing death staring her in the face, she would have given worlds but to live, to live the lowest and meanest of existences.

She suddenly felt that the ruffian was hesitating, and redoubled her shrieks.

She heard steps running along the sands, and was sure that assistance was at hand.

Her captor retreated to where the path was wider, and then suddenly cast her from him into the underwood and turned to meet the would-be rescuer.

To Lady Florence's infinite joy, the man who suddenly appeared and rushed upon her assailant proved to be no other than Ralph Romney, and she gave utterance to her emotions in a wild cry that seemed to inspire the latter with superhuman energy.

"What, ruffian, did you dare molest this lady?" cried young Romney, dashing his fist into the villain's face. "Ha! you wear a mask of metal, do you? But I will batter it into your vile face, if there is strength in this arm."

But, sturdy and skilful with his fist as the young squire was, his opponent was quite as strong and determined, and for many minutes they fought desperately on the sands.

Ralph laboured under an immense disadvantage, for his powerful and well-directed blows appeared not to make the slightest impression on the brazen visor of his opponent, while his own face was bleeding profusely from several telling blows he had received.

At last, however, he mustered all the energies of his strong frame in one great effort, and the side of the ruffian's face being presented to him he dealt him a tremendous blow, which loosened the fastenings of the mask and caused it to fall upon the sands.

Before the wearer's face could be seen, however, he covered it with his cloak and fled like a deer.

Romney pursued him for a short distance, but soon gave up the chase to return to Lady Florence, who still remained in the underwood, from which, more dead than alive, she had witnessed the strange encounter that had delivered her from death.

"Dear lady!" exclaimed Ralph, bending beside her, and assisting her to her feet, "how fortunate I chanced to come along this path! Oh, how thankful I am that Heaven has permitted me to be of service to you!"

Lady Florence only pressed his hand, but was as yet too unnerved to speak.

"You are not hurt?" exclaimed Ralph, in tones of the deepest solicitude.

"No, Ralph, no!" she murmured, "only almost frightened to death. Give me a little time and I will tell you all."

"Shall we walk slowly toward the castle? The exercise will gradually renew your strength."

"No, no, not in that direction!" she exclaimed, hastily. "At least not at present. And, oh, Ralph—I mean Mr. Romney—you may still be of service to me, if you will. I stole away from the castle in order to post a letter I have written to my godfather, and you can take it to the village for me, can you not?"

"With all my heart, dear lady! Give me the letter, and then I will assist you back to the castle."

Lady Florence put her hand in her pocket, and then drew it forth with a cry.

"It is gone!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Heaven! then it is worse than I even dreamed! The demanding of my purse and watch was nothing more than a ruse. Oh, me! Oh, me! Into what criminal and desperate hands have I fallen!"

Romney besought her to tell him everything; and she did so, telling him the particulars of her leaving the castle and her encounter at the edge of the quicksands.

"Then, from the fact of the villain also picking your pocket of the letter, you conclude that he was no common footpad? Whom do you suspect him to have been?"

"Oh, do not ask me!" moaned the young lady. "I fear my own thoughts."

"I think I can fathom them, nevertheless," said Ralph, darkly. "You suspect that your assailant was none other than your kinsman, Lord Falkland."

Lady Florence shuddered, but returned no answer.

"Oh, yes, indeed, into what evil hands have you fallen, poor lady!" exclaimed Ralph, bitterly. "And you might have had a protector, a lawful protector in me. We were play-fellows together, Lady Florence, and, though our parents never wholly buried the family feud, which has so long existed between our families, they were willing that you and I should be together and be friends. Nay, lady, do not think that I am about to renew the suit which your own lips, however flatteringly, informed me was hopeless; only I cannot help thinking that, had it been otherwise, I might have proved a strength and comfort for you in these trials that have darkened your young life—that, had it been otherwise—"

"No, no, Ralph!" said Lady Florence, trembling violently; "do not talk that way! It could not, it never can be otherwise!"

"Is it, indeed, so?" said the young gentleman, with unspeakable sadness. "At least," he added, "I can devote my life to the woman I love, if I may not win her heart; and henceforth, lady, you must consider me your servant. But see! there are lights gleaming through the oaks of the old avenue. They must have discovered your absence from the castle and raised the alarm. Come, your best plan is to meet them at once."

"Poor Ralph! how your face bleeds!" exclaimed Lady Florence, paying no attention to the approaching lights, and now for the first time noticing the wounds on his face, which, up to this point, he had kept concealed with his handkerchief.

"More scratches, my dear lady!" said he, laughing, yet delighted beyond measure with the tenderness and sympathy expressed in her tones. "But see, here they are in search of you, and it will be best that I should leave you."

She replied by the faintest perceptible pressure of his hand.

They were now surrounded by a number of grooms and other domestics of the castle bearing lanterns.

"It be my Lady Florence and the young squire," said one of them.

Romney gave them a hasty account of what had happened, in order for them to make some report to their master, and then, after receiving a parting glance from Lady Florence, he walked swiftly away in the direction of the village.

The castle was all astir, and both Lord Falkland and Madame La Grande were out on the lawn ready to receive her, as she came back in the midst of the grooms, who had signalled the success of their quest by waving their lanterns.

Madame La Grande could scarcely control her joy at the wanderer's return, but seized her in her arms and almost bore her into the drawing-room, whither they were presently followed by Lord Falkland.

"Never mind the why or wherefore that induced you so imprudently to go out alone, my dear, dear lady!" exclaimed Madame La Grande, still holding both of Lady Florence's hands in hers; "we are only too glad to have you back safe and unharmed."

Florence was still pale from the nervous shock she had undergone; but she felt her strength and pride returning to her as she stood in the presence of her hated kinsman.

"I care not now if the object of my attempting to reach Falkland village is known," she said, looking at Lord Falkland. "It was to post a letter to my godfather, praying him to come to my assistance and release me from my captivity. I had no other resource than to go myself, since every one in the castle is in Lord Falkland's pay to watch my actions and dog my footsteps. A masked ruffian met me on the way who robbed me of my watch and purse and—for reasons best known to himself—of my letter also, and then was about to cast me into the quicksands when I was rescued by the timely arrival of a gallant gentleman."

"I have heard the story from the servants," said Lord Falkland, "and shall take the earliest opportunity to personally thank Mr. Romney for the gallant service he rendered you. You wrong me so greatly, cousin, in your allusions to what you are pleased to call your 'captivity' that I will not reply to you."

Lady Florence's high spirit could put up with this gigantic hypocrisy no longer. She fairly boiled with indignation.

"Oh, infamous man!" she cried; "how dare you, fresh as you are from attempting my life, stand there, with your smooth brow, your unblushing cheek and deceitful tongue, before the hapless creature you have already doomed?"

Both Lord Falkland and Madame La Grande stared at her as though they thought her mad.

"In the name of reason, cousin, what mean you?" exclaimed the former.

"Mean? Why, monster, I mean that I believe that you are the ruffian who assaulted me and attempted my life! Your first object was to get my letter, and your previous demand for my purse and watch was but a subterfuge. Your design upon my life was probably an afterthought."

Lord Falkland and Madame La Grande looked at each other and laughed.

"Come, dear lady, you had better retire to your room," said Madame La Grande, throwing her arm around her with motherly solicitude; "you must be really ill. Your mind wanders."

"It does not; my mind is clear!" persisted Lady Florence. "Does not Lord Falkland know that I speak the truth?"

"It is simply impossible that I should know it," said his lordship, calmly.

"Why is it impossible?"

"Simply because your assailant, your would-have-been murderer, is now in custody, and confined in the strong-room of Falkland Towers. Your letter and the valuables of which he despoiled you have been recovered from him."

CHAPTER IX.

He secretly
Put pirate's colours out at both our stems
That we might fight each other in mistake,
That he should share the ruin of us both.
The Ambitious Statesman.
And hatred scowled, and folly smirked,
And envy gnawed her lip, and sneered,
And treachery in ambush lurked
Behind a flowing beard.
Venor.

At the announcement of Lord Falkland that her masked assailant was in custody in the strong-room of the castle Lady Florence stood riveted to the floor, utterly bewildered with surprise.

The flush of indignation fled from her cheek, leaving it perfectly white, and her parted lips were incapable of speech.

Madame La Grande came to her relief with maternal kindness, drawing her to the blazing fire and ridding her of her bonnet and waterproof, while Lord Falkland remained standing, with the half-smile still on his lips, but with a sad reproachfulness in his gaze.

"Cousin Florence," said he, after a long and troubled pause, "bitterly as I have noted and regretted your ceaseless dislike of me, I can well believe that you were labouring under a nervous excitement—akin, perhaps, to hysteria—when you could so far forget yourself, and think me so vile as to deem me capable of attempting your life under the cover of darkness and a disguising mask. Your real assailant, while flying from your timely protector—Heaven reward noble Ralph Romney for his valiant conduct!—was encountered by two of my grooms while crossing the lawn, knocked down and brought before me. He was bleeding and terrified beyond measure, and in his alarm, made a sort of rambling confession of what he had done, at the same time delivering up the articles he had deprived you of. I instantly had him placed in confinement, raised the alarm, and sent out the whole household to your rescue. His object in attempting your life, as you say he did, I cannot understand; but, at any rate, he shall assuredly hang for it, if there is a gibbet in England, or I have power in this county. If you are not already too much fatigued, I beg that you will accompany Madame La Grande and myself at once to the strong-room of the castle, and look upon this ruffian yourself. There may be some feature in his face or dress by which you may be able to

identify him, though that would be hardly necessary, since he has himself incoherently confessed his crime."

"I will accompany you at once, my lord," said Lady Florence, rising.

"You must not think of it, my dear—wait till tomorrow!" cried Madame La Grande, with affectionate solicitude. "You are already fevered and unstrung."

"I shall go at once, if you will be so kind as to accompany me," persisted Lady Florence.

"You choose the wisest course," exclaimed Lord Falkland, with apparent cheerfulness.

He rang the bell; and they were soon threading the basement passages of the castle, preceded by a servant with a torch.

The donjon-keep of Falkland Towers was of the old feudal pattern, consisting of a single large grated cell, and approached by long stone corridors, which had upon this evening been aired and lighted for the first time for a number of years.

An iron lamp also shed a dull effulgence through the cell itself. The servant furnished additional light by flaring his torch through the grating, and Lady Florence could see the figure of a burly, villainous-looking fellow, who was moodily pacing up and down the damp flags. He was bushy-headed, and his face was so heavily bearded that none of it could be seen but two shining black eyes, which every now and then looked askance surlily at the party through the bars.

"Do you recognise any feature of face or dress in this brute, cousin?" asked Lord Falkland, speaking very kindly.

"I cannot say," said Lady Florence, much agitated; "but it seems to me that my assailant wore no beard."

"That may readily have been disposed of under his mask. But consider his general appearance, his garb and gait, and see if you cannot identify some feature of either."

"Indeed I cannot—I was so frightened at the time—oh, pray, my lord, let us quit this horrible place!" said Lady Florence.

"Certainly. Look you, rascal!" continued Lord Falkland, speaking in a harsh and magisterial voice to the prisoner. "After robbing this young lady what was your object in attempting her life?"

The prisoner gave a low growl, like that of a caged hyena.

"You've got back the articles as I took from her," he added. "Ax me no questions, for I ain't going to answer any."

"But, rascal!" cried Lord Falkland, in terrible wrath, "what did you mean by stealing her letter, which could be of no value to you, and what did you mean by telling her that there were those who would pay dearly for her death?"

"Well, I took the paper because I thought there might be money in it," was the sullen reply; "and perhaps there be them as you knows nothing of who would pay high for her."

"I shall yet grind everything out of you, low villain that you are!" exclaimed the enraged nobleman, shaking his finger at the prisoner, who turned eringingly from him and threw himself on a heap of straw in one corner of his cell.

"Come, cousin," said Lord Falkland, offering his arm to Lady Florence; "you have already suffered extremely; we will return to the drawing-room."

Lady Florence hesitated, and then, for the first time, accepted her kinsman's arm.

The latter exchanged a significant glance with Madame La Grande, and the party, retracing their steps through the gloomy passages, returned to the drawing-room.

Here Lord Falkland drew forth Lady Florence's purse, watch and letter, and handed them to her, saying:

"My dear cousin, here are the articles delivered to me by the robber whom we have just quitted. The envelope of the letter, as you will observe, still retains its seal unbroken. But I beg that, upon your retiring to your room, you will open the letter, re-read it carefully, and seal and direct it again; then, if you will permit me, in the morning I shall have the pleasure and honour of driving you to the village that you may post the letter yourself, but in a manner befitting a lady of your noble rank. And, dear cousin, if heretofore my jealousy of your very shadow has unconsciously led me to place you under what you seem to have felt as a galling restraint, it has been the fault of my head and not of heart. At any rate I shall strive to make amends in the future. You shall have whatever company you please. I shall bring up every gentleman and noble ladies from London, and we will endeavour to dissipate the gloom of the ancient towers with modern life. What say you? My only desire is to win your love. Think and feel as you may, you cannot forbid me striving with all my energy to that end. Good-night, cousin."

He took her hand, and pressed his lips to it before she could prevent him, and was gone from the room before she could reproach him.

"What can be the reason of this wonderful change in my lord?" exclaimed Madame La Grande, in a voice of supreme astonishment.

"I am sure I cannot imagine," said Lady Florence, who was herself completely bewildered.

"Ah, my dear lady!" said the other, throwing her arm affectionately around her, and looking archly into her eyes; "who can account for the changes which a vast and all-absorbing passion may work in a man—in even the saddest, sternest and most world-tired? By my faith, such love must be deserving, if it be not successful."

It was no blush of pleasure that rushed to the proud girl's cheek and brow at this insinuating speech; but pretty little Annette, rushing in to rejoice over her mistress's return—for the excitement in the castle was not yet all allayed, and the maid had been out with the rest—prevented her making a reply.

"Are you really so glad to see me, Annette?" she said, when she reached her room, to which Madame La Grande also accompanied her.

"Glad! Oh, my lady!" exclaimed the girl, covering her mistress's hand with kisses—her eyes brimming and her dark face fairly vivid with pleasure. "Oh, my lady! if you only knew how I wait when I was awakened by the alarm in the castle, and heard that you were gone, and if you knew how my heart dances now!"

"Dear child, I believe you!" said Lady Florence, patting with her white hand the treacherous little head that bent before her.

"Ah, my dear young lady, you may do so safely," said Madame La Grande's sweet, velvet voice; "I have reared Annette from her childhood, and can answer for the perfect innocence and artlessness of her tender little heart."

Lord Falkland, after quitting the drawing-room, sought his library, ordered lunch, and then moodily paced the floor.

The air of cheerfulness and gaiety which he had assumed so well deserted him entirely, and his handsome face was again darkened by its accustomed moroseness and gloom. An hour or more passed, but his step was still restless upon the carpet, when a light tap fell upon the door, and Madame La Grande entered.

"Well?" said she.

"Well?" said he.

And both sat down side by side, he still moodily and dark, and she with a sarcastic smile upon her lips.

"How do you think my new plan with her will work?" he said, at last.

"I do not think well of it at all," she replied, with her cold, quiet little laugh. "You had the bird in your hand; now you give it to the wind."

"But some change was necessary, Bella. If a girl is wholly in your power you can't actually drag her to the altar and cram the marriage ceremony down her throat."

"No, but you can kill her, when her death will answer your purpose as well as her doll's hand in marriage," exclaimed the bad woman, in a voice the intensity of whose evil stress made up for lack of volume. "Oh, faint heart! why did you not give her to the quicksands when you held her on high as a mere baby in your grasp?"

"By Heaven! I could not do it! I know I faltered! What an absolute fiend you are, Bella!"

She laughed again, coldly, cruelly.

"I love vice for its own sake, and you indulge in it from habit and compulsion," she said, mockingly.

"I love it also because I find it sweet to hate the innocent and good. I do not wear the French galley-brand of the Fleur de Lis upon my right shoulder for nothing. I would not remove it if I could, for it has become the symbol of my life's sole principle, which is hate! hate! hate!—nothing but hate! But women were always braver than men. Macbeth would have been a spiritless poltroon but for the sublime courage of his wife."

He looked at her without speaking for some moments, and then said:

"But you must admit that having committed the mistake—if mistake it was—I got out of it pretty shrewdly in getting back here to the castle in time to trump up this bogus out-throat and give the alarm to the household."

"Yes, after being warned by young Romney's fits, despite your bronzen visor," answered the other, Falkland smiling at his feat and clenching his hand.

"If you are proud of your Fleur de Lis, remember that in India my sobriquet was the 'cobra,' and beware!"

She saw that she had gone too far.

"Come," said she, mockingly, "we have been friends too long to quarrel now, Dick. Perhaps after all everything is for the best. Only, if Lady Florence is to be permitted to mingle with the world, it is necessary that I should be near her constantly, and so must appear in some other and higher character than the housekeeper of Falkland Towers. But of that hereafter. How are you going to cover over this last imposition on the girl?"

"Hawkes ought to be here even now," said Lord Falkland, looking at his watch. "He must be fonder of that dragon than I would be, although perchance I have experienced a worse one. Of course, in the morning there will be a great hubbub on account of the escaped prisoner. Ha, ha, ha!"

There came a sharp knock on the door, and, all unbidden, staggered into the room, much the worse for liquor, the bushy-headed, rough-bearded culprit of the strong-room.

"What do you mean by roaming through the castle in that disguise, you drunken rascal?" cried Falkland, propping him against the wall and tearing off his wig and false beard, thus revealing the still unprepossessing physiognomy of Mr. Hawkes, the steward. "Did any one see you as you came through the passages?"

"Not a single soul, I assure you—mod a soul, my lord royal nabob of Botany Bay!"

"Oh, you rascal!" he exclaimed, "do you dare to recall the past to me, and here in this place?"

"Come, now, enough of that, old pal!" growled the steward, shaking himself free from his lordship's hands. "I'm as good as you, if you are a live lord; and, if you're ashamed of the jolly old life in the Indies, why, I ain't; and, moreover, I ain't a goin' to take many more hard knocks like that nuther."

There was danger in the ruffian's sullen eye, and his lordship's continued anger might have cost him dearly, but the white hand of Madame La Grande was softly laid upon his shoulder.

"My dear Mr. Hawkes," said she, smiling blandly and benignly upon the offended drunkard, "perhaps you have no cause to be ashamed of your worthy and patriotic past, but certainly your common sense, naturally so strong, must tell you of the imprudence of remembering it here, where all of us are so comfortably situated."

"You're right, ma'am, as I axes his lordship's pardon," said Hawkes, backing towards the door with a ridiculous attempt at dignity. "You're right, ma'am, if I shays it myself. I never yet knowed a true galley-bird as wasn't a rum gal never did, I assure yer!"

As he staggered out and away Lord Falkland slammed the door after him fiercely.

"The fiends seize him!" he muttered. "If he grows too troublesome, I may have to put a bullet in him yet, useful as he is to me."

"Or I may have to put my dagger in him!" exclaimed Madame La Grande, white to the lips with suppressed rage, and her little hand still lingering in her bosom, whither she had thrust it. "The scoundrel—the beast—the mongrel cur! But come," she added, changing her mood with that miraculous self-command she possessed. "It grows late. Give me a word as to your use in this new rôle of our pretty little lady?"

"Don't you see it, my dear? The fashionables, by whom I will surround Florence will be, of my own set—among whom, as you know, are some men and women of real rank. You shall also be with her everywhere. Do you think there will be any difficulty in lending her into some seeming indiscretion—or real, for that matter, I care not which—that will compel her to the acceptance of my hand, as a shield against opinion?"

"Not if you leave her in my charge, I assure you," replied Madame La Grande, with her little, low laugh. "But," she added, with her gayest and archest smile, "do you forget, my lord, that you are already married to me?"

"Not a bit of it, my charmer!" replied the other, laughingly. "But who would be the chief sufferer by a mock marriage—you or her? After we have plucked her to the last farthing, she may flutter wither soever she may, albeit with a broken wing."

CHAPTER X.

We live among the cold and false,
And we must seem like them;
And much we are, for we are false
As those we most condemn.
We touch our lips their sweetest smile,
Our tongues their softest tone;
We borrow others' likeness till
We almost lose our own. Mrs. Chandler.

LADY FLORENCE passed a most miserable night, but fell into a feverish slumber towards morning.

Even this was broken in a short time by the ringing of the great alarm bell of Falkland Towers, and a great noise both in the castle itself and in the neighboring stables.

She called Annette, and told her to dress herself and run out to discover the cause of the alarm; but the hurried entrance of Madame La Grande prevented the necessity of this.

"Oh, my lady!" she exclaimed, apparently in the greatest excitement. "Such unpleasant news!"

"Pray do not tell it at present then," said Lady Florence. "I have the worst nervous headache I ever had in my life, and cannot bear anything more."

"But the villain who robbed you has escaped!"

"There, you have forced it on me, haven't you?"

said the sufferer, patting his head. "I thought he was securely confined in the strong-room of the castle."

"Indeed he was! But he must have had a file, or some other kind of instrument concealed upon his person; for this morning the steward found two bars of the iron grating out, and the cell empty. How did he get a file? Dearly well! there must be traitors in the castle!"

"A great many of them, I do not doubt!" groaned Florence.

"There!" cried Madame La Grande, rushing to the window. "There they go! a dozen grooms in the saddle, this way and that, in hot haste! And there goes my lord himself on the roan mare, dashing away to the telegraph station at Hythe! Heaven grant that they may catch the ruffian!"

Lady Florence turned her troubled head upon her pillow, and sortinized the unwonted excitement of the housekeeper in considerable surprise.

"You appear very much wrought up, madam," she said, dryly.

"How can I help it, my dear young lady?" said Madame La Grande, coming with streaming eyes to her bedside. "When I think of the possible escape of this horrible ruffian, who came so near depriving me of the only lady I love in the world—I may say, my only friend on earth—I am overcome with indignation and sorrow!"

"Pray do not cry!" said Florence, very gently; "but, indeed, I am very ill and shall not be able to come down until noon at least. I won't eat anything until then."

The wily woman took her departure with profuse expressions of condolence, and pretty Annette made herself useful by bathing her mistress's brows with eau-de-cologne.

At last Florence fell into a deep and refreshing sleep.

She awoke about noon, much recuperated, to receive a message from his lordship, stating that he had every hope of having the escaped criminal apprehended, and asking if she were well enough to come down to luncheon and afterwards permit him to drive her to the village post-office, as he had suggested on the previous evening.

Florence arose at once and dressed with care.

When she descended to luncheon Lord Falkland received her with the most respectful politeness and, with the exception of a few remarks respecting the excitement of the morning, was not very talkative.

A little later and she was beside him in his elegant dog-cart, trundling rapidly towards Falkland village.

Florence had not neglected to open and re-peruse her letter to the Earl of Glenmorgan. She had it in her pocket, resealed and re-directed, and she kept her hand upon it all the way.

As they approached the point of the road bordering upon the terrible quicksands her kinsman—as we shall continue to call him—said to her, very earnestly:

"I shall drive slowly now, my dear cousin, for I wish you to show me the precise spot where you met with your terrible danger of last evening—that is, if it will not distress you—for I am very curious to mark it."

Lady Florence threw a quick, searching, woman's look into the depths of his eyes.

Convinced as were the proofs to the contrary that had been presented to her, she had a vague, lingering intuition that all was not clear—that there was duplicity of some sort in the fair-seeming, courteous gentleman at her side.

But the only answer to her questioning, almost accusing look was a stare of perplexity and surprise, and she turned away with a little sigh.

"This is the spot, my lord," said she, pointing with her finger, "where the bad man first waylaid me."

His lordship stopped the vehicle, and gazed curiously at the narrow road, with the thick oases on one side, and on the other the glimmering quicksands, which were now reduced to a narrow strip, for it was flood tide.

"The most dangerous part of the road," he muttered. "The villain chose his place well."

"And that place, my lord," said Lady Florence, again pointing her finger, as they moved on into the broader road, "is where young Mr. Romney came so opportunely to my assistance, and gave the coward such a terrible beating with his fists—although the latter was much the taller man, and had his face and head protected by a metallic mask."

She again glanced at him with her quick, bright eyes, and almost thought she detected a convulsive twitching of the lip, but it died in an instant if it existed at all; and she gave another little sigh—whether of relief or regret she hardly knew herself.

"The traces of their struggle are still apparent on the sandy road," said his lordship, clearing his throat. "As I said before, I shall take an early opportunity to thank Mr. Romney for his noble conduct. What do you say, cousin? Suppose we call at Romney House for that purpose on our way back

from the village? It is a roundabout way, but we have time at our disposal."

"With all my heart," said the young lady, and she said it so heartily that this time his lordship unmistakably changed colour.

He whipped up, and drove on more rapidly.

"Do you think the man will be rearrested, my lord?" said Lady Florence.

"I haven't a doubt of it, cousin."

"Most of 'em about the castle has doubts though, your lordship," said the liveried groom who rode in the rumble behind them.

He was a simple, grinning young bumpkin, who thus presumed upon some little confidences that had been bestowed upon him.

Lord Falkland gave him a look—Lady Florence saw it—which caused him to turn pale and tremble. On the following morning this little groom was discharged from the castle stables, after being badly horsewhipped by Hawkes, the steward.

When they arrived in front of the post-office of the little village, around which was collected a throng of idlers and others, Lord Falkland threw the reins to the groom and sprang out.

"Now give me your letter, Cousin Florence," said he.

She hesitated, having determined to put it into the letter-box herself.

"What! still suspicious!" he cried, laughing. "See! I will carry it high above my head, until you see it disappear in the slit of the box, which you can see from your seat there."

She blushed, and handed him the letter, but kept her eyes on it.

He carried it, as he had said he would, high above his head, the crowd quickly giving way before him, turned round once, showing her the letter, with a smile on his lips, then, whick! it disappeared in the letter-box, before her eyes—or she thought it did.

"Thank Heaven, my good godfather will at last know something of my actual position, and hasten to my relief!" she murmured to her heart as her kinsman sprang back to the dog-cart with a merry laugh.

Poor, innocent Lady Florence! not to dream that the hand which apparently deposited her letter in the box was that of a practised gamester, of a conjuror of the cards, who could flip an ace from the bottom to the top of a pack with a rapidity which no eye could follow.

Now, Lady Florence's letter—which reposed very securely in her "kinsman's" breast-pocket, and which he afterwards duly read and burned—ran as follows:

"FALKLAND TOWERS, —, 18—.

"MY BELOVED GODFATHER,—Oh, you cannot imagine how unhappy I have been ever since my poor papa's death! I am a poor captive, godpapa, at the mercy of one who professes to be my Cousin Guy, the present Lord Falkland, but who, I feel satisfied, is an impostor—a wicked and unscrupulous adventurer, who must have got possession of my real cousin's secrets and papers by some foul means, and is now lording it as the Baron of Falkland Towers. He has discharged all the old faithful domestics of the castle and filled their places with creatures of his own, some of whom I know must be criminals. He has imposed on the tenantry to an exorbitant degree. The new maid and housekeeper he has forced upon me appear to be honest and good, but the very fact of their having come by his appointment causes me to distrust them. I am caged, godpapa, caged! Oh, how my cheek burns to say it! how yours must burn to hear it! for I know you still love your own little Florence, godpapa; I know you will hasten to me and judge for yourself of the misery and indignity of my surroundings. Every one in the castle is a spy upon me. They will not let me go out of doors alone. I intend to steal away to-night and carry this letter to the village myself. I shudder to think of the dreary night and the lonely road, but it is my only resource. Lord Falkland, as he styles himself, has seized every other letter I have written.

"Oh, my heart is breaking.

"Come to me, godpapa! come and save your loving but supremely unhappy

"FLORENCE FALKLAND."

The letter—counterfeiting Lady Florence's hand admirably—which the Earl of Glenmorgan received, ran as follows:

"FALKLAND TOWERS, —, 18—.

"DEAR, DEAR GODFATHER,—I am happier now than I have ever been since my poor father's death. Cousin Guy is everything that is kind, noble, and good. Ah, with such comforters, how soon we forget even the bitterest afflictions!

"He wants to see you very much, but says he will not invite you to come until the castle has been thoroughly renovated, which will take a long time; so I shall not yet venture to invite you either, dearly as I love you.

"How are you all in Yorkshire? You must let one of my godfathers write and tell me everything about you.

"Cousin Guy is soon going to bring some friends from London. They are to be from the most select and upper circles, and I anticipate a delightful time.

"You would scarcely dream how admirably my cousin, after his long absence from home, carries his new honours as the Baron of Falkland.

"The tenantry adore him. He has thought it best to discharge some of the old, worthless domestics, and those with whom he has filled their places are paragons of respect and obedience.

"I have got the dearest new housekeeper too, and the sweetest little lady's maid.

"But forgive me this twaddle; I'm so happy I can't control my pen any more than my tongue.

"My love to the countess.

"Your superlatively happy god-daughter,
"FLORENCE FALKLAND."

"So," said the old earl, after perusing this missive, "if the little rattlepate is so happy there is no need of my going to Kent at all as I had intended. It leaves me all to myself, with nothing to do but deer-stalking and grouse shooting in the Highlands. Countess, little Florence sends her love to you, and says that her cousin Guy, the new Lord Falkland, is a trump. I'm glad of it, for I had reason to fear he was a rascal.

So runs the world away!

(To be continued.)

GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE holmsman had received his orders—the very instant the words left the captain's lips—to put his helm hard a lee, so as to bring the schooner sharp around into a narrow, canal-like passage, which the captain was looking for.

Silence had been ordered fore and aft, and so observed that the dash of waves against the rocky shore, the ripple of the prow which cut through the water, and the shrill whistle of the wind amid the rigging were all that could be heard.

Suddenly the voice of the captain sharp and clear—"Port, hard—lower away, and haul down!"—was heard, and while the sails fell fluttering to the deck like the wings of a wounded gull the schooner shot right in for the cliff, and the crew shudderingly held breath, for it seemed as if she was rushing on destruction.

But, with a grating jar, which showed how very near indeed she was to annihilation, the vessel sped in between walls of solid rock until checked in speed she seemed to be wedged in a riven chasm of the mighty cliff.

No longer did the rush of water or the shrieking of the wind among the ropes fall on the ear—they were in a calm of wind and water, and in darkness except where the cloud-reft sky overhead could be faintly seen.

An instant later, while the crew of the yacht were furling sail, another rush and rustle astern were heard and Phorresteere remarked to his wife:

"The sloop which gave us kindly warning shares the refuge we have gained."

Almost at that moment a twinkling light was seen in the side of the cliff to the right of the yacht, and as it brightened or became enlarged they could see that it came from the head of an artificial vault or chamber in the cliff.

A few moments only passed, and a voice coming from the direction where the light was held cried out:

"What son of Ishmael wanders in the desert now?"

"One who hides from the Men of Brass. None other know where Dagon lies buried," replied Phorresteere.

"All is well!" cried the first speaker. "The sons of Dagon are strong; woe to those who test their strength. Come and report!"

"Who is he and what does he mean?" asked Edward Zane, who, with Stella Hayden, had come on deck.

"A friend with the will and power to serve us," said Phorresteere. "If you would see a strange sight follow me and fear not!"

"Come!" said Stella, as Phorresteere and his cabin boy landed on the inhaling rock. "Come, Edward, I am impelled to go and see what is to be seen."

Edward Zane could not refuse, for she clasped his hand in her own and pulled him on.

Up an ascent steep in places and nowhere very smooth they followed the rays of light until they reached a narrow pass, where a man with long white hair and beard, dressed plainly but well, waited their coming.

His keen black eyes seemed to read the character of Captain Phorresteere at a glance, though he evidently did not know him, for he held out his hand and said:

"Though a stranger, son of Ishmael, thou art welcome. Dost vouch for those who come behind?"

"I do!" said Phorresteere.

And he touched the proffered hand with a grip which fully satisfied the other of his right to hospitality and protection.

"Then enter, and find what you seek."

The man placed a reflecting lantern on a projecting ledge, and, turning, preceded the visitors into an immense natural cavern, where it seemed as if fully a hundred people were scattered about—some seated at tables playing cards, or other games, others eating or drinking, all seeming to be at home by their looks and actions. Of these a few only were women—the greater part were men—in looks sea-faring men. Quite a number of light rowboats were seen near the side-walls of the great room, and oars, boxes, bales of merchandize, etc., lay in piles here and there.

"This way, friends," said he who had welcomed Phorresteere and his party, and he led them to a long table apart from all the rest, with a kind of chandelier hanging above it, and chairs set around it.

"Do I address the High Priest of the Order of Dagon?" asked Phorresteere, as he sat down, and motioned to those with him to do the same.

"I am he!" said the man with white hair and beard, whose bright eyes, unwrinkled face and strong, melodious voice spoke of anything but old age.

"Then in myself I introduce the captain of the yacht 'Stellarita,' manned by sons of Ishmael; the gentleman on my right is the owner, the lady next to him a queenly daughter of Sybaris, this my cabin-boy and nearest friend."

"Ye are welcome to shelter, food, drink and all the aid ye require," was the reply. "But who are those?"

The man pointed to a group of persons advancing, whom Phorresteere recognized as those he had seen on the sloop in the river.

"Friends, I have reason to believe, since from them I received timely warning of danger this night. Yet I do not vouch for them."

The leader advanced boldly and made three rapid signs, which the High Priest of Dagon answered, and which seemed satisfactory, for he welcomed them as he had welcomed Phorresteere.

They were motioned to seats at another part of the table, but near the first party, and then their entertainer touched a bell.

Instantly two young lads, dressed as sailors, brought platters of cold meats, bread, cheese, and butter, pitchers of beer, and bottles of stronger drink, and placed them with plates and glasses before the visitors.

"Eat, drink and be merry—we know not when we may die!" said the host. "And as ye eat, if either hath any report to make or favour to ask from the great Brotherhood of Dagon, my ears are open."

"I've not much to say!" replied the leader of the last party who entered. "The police have been hot after us to-night, and likely will be till the scent cools. So we made harbour with you. We've got some sparklers we'd like to swap off for flinties, if you are inclined. Show 'em, Peter."

One of the men rose and laid a casket of jewels before the host.

"My jewels! The very gems that the boy stole from me!" cried Stella Hayden, as the former opened the case.

The three men sprang to their feet, while Stella and Edward Zane rose to meet their threatening looks.

"Who said stole?" cried Peter Bellamy, angrily. "An' who is she, I'd like to know, as lays claim to our property?"

"Silence!" said the man at the head of the table, sternly. "There is no one can quarrel here but I!"

"Are you the men who were in the sloop?" cried Stella, as a thought now struck her. "If you are keep the jewels without a word, but, oh, give me what is worth more than all the jewels in the land—my—"

"Hush, a moment. I hear a signal. More visitors come. When I have seen that they are right then we will settle what is now before us!"

The High Priest of Dagon rose as he thus spoke, took his lantern and went to the spot where he had received his first visitors.

In a few seconds he was seen coming back with quite a party, the coxswain of the boat left behind, Barnabas Bludge and Count Volchini, bearing in his arms the form of a lovely girl who seemed to sleep, for she breathed regularly, yet lay with closed eyes in the arms that carried her, for he would trust her support to no one else.

"More friends," said the host, "by sign and word correct. Our board is well graced this morning!"

"Is it mornin' sare?" asked Peter Bellamy, scratching his kinky hair, for he had a wig on.

"Yes—the gray of dawn tinges the hills outside," said the host. "Now let this daughter of Sybaris speak what I interrupted."

And he turned to Stella Hayden.

"I asked for a jewel worth more than all else to

me on earth—my child, my little Nellie, whom I saw on the sloop to which these men belong!" said Stella, earnestly. "My child, my Nellie—give her to me, ye men who hold her, and name what you want!"

"A thousand—neither more nor less!" said the captain of the sloop. "Go fetch her, Peter, for I know the woman is good for what she says!"

Peter Bellamy hurried after Nellie, while Stella Hayden turned a fierce and angry look on Barnabas Bludge, who scowled back his hate on her.

Edward Zane, unheeded and not waiting for an invitation, poured out a glass of brandy and drank it off, an example some of the others followed.

Three or four minutes passed, and Peter Bellamy returned with Ragged Dick leading little Nellie by the hand, her blue eyes distended with wonder as she gazed on the strange, wild scene.

"Nellie—Nellie, my angel, my own!" screamed Stella Hayden, rushing forward, lifting the child up, and almost smothering her with passionate kisses, while tears rained down her cheeks.

"Who are you—how is it I am your Nellie who was always grandpa's Nellie?" asked the little one in artless wonder, when Stella, staggering to a seat by the side of Edward Zane, held her where she could look in the child's sweet, lovely face.

"Grandpa and grandma, my father and mother! where are they?" asked Stella, trembling from head to foot.

"I don't know—these men stole me away from where they were in a cottage!" said the child.

"'Twas you we took her for—so hand us over the thousand an' say nothin' about the sparklers!" said the captain of the sloop, reaching out his brawny hand.

"Ware hawk! ware hawk! a surprise!" shouted a voice from in front of the cavern at this second, and with a shout of mingled terror and anger every man and woman in the vast place sprang to their feet, while an alarm bell rang—clang, clang from the roof.

"Stand to your arms—douse every glim, ye Sons of Dagon!" shouted the High Priest, "Treason hath opened our gates—stand to your arms, without I give the scattering cry! Be silent."

All was still as death in the cavern in a second more. Every light was out. One could hear hard, short breathing—nothing more.

Then there was heard the sound of shouts, of firing down where the vessels were—shouts of pain and anger.

"If your men are true the cops will be beaten back. We must not expose this retreat until the last moment!" said the High Priest, speaking to one on his right whom he believed to be Phorreste. He received no reply, but there was a low sobbing on his left where Stella Hayden clung to little Nellie with a mother's love.

The noise below grew louder, stronger, nearer. "Your men are worsted. We must rally and defend ourselves here! We can scatter by the rear, but it would be cowardly to leave our treasures without a blow! Follow to the front!" cried the High Priest.

The next instant a glare of light was seen in front, and it seemed as if the cavern was filling with men rushing forward, carrying bull's-eye lanterns in one hand and clubs or revolvers in the other.

There was for a minute, two perhaps, a terrible struggle in the cavern—blows, shots, and shouts on every side, and then came a stentorian shout:

"Scatter!"

"Nellie—my Nellie, cling to me!" cried Stella Hayden, as she felt some one trying to tear the child from her arms.

"Die then, you she-fiend, die!" cried Barnabas Bludge, who strove in vain to tear the child away.

And Stella felt a keen blade enter her body. She did not scream, or loose her hold. She only said:

"Cling to me, Nellie, cling to your mother, darling!"

Who would have thought death was at her heart even then, to hear her speak so earnestly, yet so calmly?

There was a sudden rush—a wild, triumphant shout—a few scattering shots, as the occupants of the cavern fled, fired more in revenge than defence—then a wild shriek of agony from the lips of a woman, and the battle was over.

The police, under the lead of the brave detective, held the cavern—held the vessels below—held a few wounded thieves as prisoners, while several were slain, and now they had time to see what their loss and their gain was.

Like a statue, frozen in his shame, Edward Zane had stood from the moment of the first alarm, near where now he saw Stella Hayden on her knees, still clinging to little Nellie, though the life-blood was welling from her bosom.

From her form, with a wild cry of dismay, he

turned to see Anna Zane, his own wife, reel back into the arms of her father, wounded and dying, for all he knew, by the last scattering volley, fired as the thieves ran through a secret passage in the rear of the cave, escaping by ladders which reached the crest of the ridge before the police found how they went.

Bludge lay dead but a few yards away, shot by some random ball, while Volchint, wounded mortally, but yet living, lay where poor Georgine knelt in an attitude of despair.

"Edward—Edward, I am dying!" moaned out Stella Hayden. "Oh! care for my poor child—my little Nellie!"

Edward Zane did not seem to hear her. His eyes, frozen with a mortal agony, were fixed on the white face of poor Anna, who was now sustained in the arms of Mr. Evarts.

"Oh, Heaven! is she dying?" he gasped, at last, sobered completely in that terrible moment, as he approached the spot where Mr. Evarts was, while the detective called a surgeon to his aid.

"Stand back, ingrate, stand back, or go to your wanton's aid!" cried Mr. Evarts, angrily. "If my child dies you are her murderer!"

"It is too true. It is too true!" groaned Zane, in agony unspeakable.

"Old man, blame him not. Pour your curses on my head!" cried Stella Hayden, calling all the rallying strength of struggling nature up to speak while she could. "It was I who tempted, who drugged and betrayed him. Blame him not, but curse me before I go down to death and perdition! But do not curse my child—my poor, poor Nellie!"

"Nellie—my lost little Nellie, her child?" cried the old merchant, looking in wonder at the child he now recognized.

"Nellie—Nellie!" gasped Mrs. Zane, recognizing the little girl, faint as she was.

"The sweet, good lady who was so kind to me," said Nellie, in turn recognizing Mrs. Zane.

The surgeon was now on the spot, and, seeing Stella Hayden bleeding fearfully, he hastened to her aid.

"No, no!" gasped the dying woman. "Do not heed me! Help her!"

She pointed to Mrs. Zane.

"But you are bleeding to death."

"Yes, yes—let me die, but save her for—for him."

She pointed to Edward Zane, who, racked with agony, stood gazing from one to the other.

"Lady," she gasped, and she crept towards Anna Zane, "I am dying. Forgive him—it has been my sole fault that he drank—I have tried to take him from you, but I could not. Oh, forgive him, and—care for my helpless, innocent child—my poor Nellie. Do—it is my dying prayer."

"If I live I will—I will," said Anna Zane. "Thank Heaven! Nellie, dear Nellie, good-bye!" gasped the mother.

One long, shuddering gasp, and all was over. Nellie clung to her dead mother, for she seemed to know in that short, terrible moment that she had a mother, and not knowing her wickedness her young heart spoke out in the love which nature gives.

The surgeon hastened to check the flowing of blood which fell from the side of Mrs. Zane, and he soon cheered her almost distracted father with the information that, though severe, the wound was not mortal.

Edward Zane knelt and wept when he heard it, but he dared not go near her until her gentle voice called him as she also called Nellie to her side.

"Edward," said she, "I do not know how far you have erred. But I promised the dying mother of this child to forgive you. I do—no matter how much you have sinned; living or dying I forgive you. I have never ceased to love you, to hope for you. Nellie, henceforth you are my child."

He could not speak.

He knelt and kissed her hand, and his tears fell hot upon it.

Mr. Evarts, stern and implacable, did not speak to him, but he went to poor Georgine, whom he now recognized.

"Are you with him again?" he asked, pointing to Volchint.

"Sir, the last I knew until I found myself in this place I was alone in my own chamber in the house where you left me. Drugged, I suppose, I have been borne here. I know no more—only he is dying."

"Not dying, but dead," said the surgeon, who approached at that moment, and laid his hand upon the pulse of the libertine.

Georgine bowed her head above his form, and wept.

"I cannot help it now—he can harm me no more, and I did so love him!" she gasped.

They let her weep—it could do no harm; and when at last the order came for all to repair to the boat to go back they kindly and gently raised her up, and told her he should have decent burial.

Mr. Evarts tried to console her, and told her that henceforth, so long as she desired it, she should find a home and fatherly protection under his roof.

Detective Bennett, though he failed to arrest the chief of the thieves, or the High Priest of Dagon, as he was known, broke up the gang completely, arrested some and killed other members of it, and recovered a vast amount of stolen goods.

Phorreste and his devoted wife escaped.

One more picture and we have done.

It is not always, nor often indeed, that we can record the sure reform of one who by natural appetite seems born to drink, if we may so express it. It is seldom we can trust one who breaks his solemn pledge of total abstinence.

But there are exceptions.

The case of Edward Zane was one. His terrible lessons could not be forgotten; he could not do too much to earn and deserve the forgiveness of his angel wife—of sweet, noble Anna Zane.

He signed the pledge once more. He has not broken it, and he never will. His home is an earthly Heaven to him now, and little Nellie has been an angel in it, under the care of Angel Anna.

One day, not long since, she met a ragged boy in the street. He tried to run away from her sight, but she called to him, and he stopped. She called again, and, trembling, shamefaced, he came to where she stood.

"Ragged Dick," she said, "if you will go home where I live, my new mamma will give you some better clothes, and I will teach you the prayers I promised to teach you that terrible night in the storm, and I will take you to Sunday school."

Ragged Dick went with her, and found friends where he had not a hope.

There is no "Ragged Dick" now; but there is a smart boy in a certain printing-office which we could name, that is known by the name of Richard, who is clean, industrious, temperate, and happy. Little Nellie is his friend.

Reader, he, like Edward Zane, is out of peril, and our story is done.

THE END.

SCIENCE.

GLASS-LINED WATER PIPES.—In New York glass-lined iron pipes are being used to convey water. The friction is lessened, the pipes are always clean, and the water is kept pure. Between the glass and iron is a layer of plaster of Paris, which, being a non-conductor of heat, prevents the water from freezing in winter.

VOLATILITY OF IRON.—It seems that iron is volatile at very high temperatures, the same as gold and platinum. Dr. Elsner, Director of the Berlin porcelain factory, enclosed a small piece of wrought iron in an unglazed crucible and exposed it for several hours to a temperature of at least 3,000 deg. C. On removing the cover of the crucible small needles of metallic iron were easily discerned, clearly showing that iron can be volatilized at high temperatures.

MICROSCOPICAL DETECTION OF STEARINE IN BUTTER.—The microscope affords the only means of detecting stearine in butter without the aid of the most refined chemical analysis. The mode of examination is simple—A small piece of butter is to be placed cold on a slip of glass, and a thin cover upon it. The cover is to be pressed down until a very thin film of butter exists between the slide and the cover. Examined by polarized light under a 75 deg. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. object-glass, the feathery crystals of stearine will be visible if stearine be present in any important proportion as an adulterant.

DO PLANTS THROW OFF CARBONIC ACID GAS?—Plants have been commonly thought to differ from animals in the gases which they secrete—the animal parting with carbonic acid, while the plant gave out oxygen. Dr. J. C. Draper, however, maintains that all living things, whether animal or plant, absorb oxygen and give out carbonic acid; and that the life of the plant is one continuous drinking-in of oxygen gas. Having grown plants similarly nourished in the dark and in the sunlight, he found that all the same parts were produced in both cases almost at the same times, and that the slightly slower evolution of the series grown in the dark is marked by a slightly smaller weight, while the same plant measured by night and by day grows slightly faster in darkness than in sunlight. The roots of plants grown under both circumstances throw out the same kind of excrement. Therefore, as the evolution and weight and root secretion agree, he urges that the carbonic acid has been in both cases thrown off as a consequence of growth, and has never been absorbed by the roots, and then given out as a vapour from the leaves.

MANUFACTURE OF CHLORATE OF POTASH.—To manufacture chlorate of potash on a large scale it has

been recommended by W. Hunt to adopt the following method: Milk of lime is made to trickle down over bricks placed in a tower where it comes in contact with a continuous current of chlorine gas. Chloride of lime is the chief product, and by treating this with chloride of potassium chlorate of potash is formed, which can be purified by crystallization.

HARNES DRESSING.—Long-continued observations show that harness and other leather exposed to the action of ammonia continually given off in stables become weak and rotten sooner than other leather. Even when care is taken to protect it with grease this takes place. Professor Artus recommends the addition of a small quantity of glycerine to the oil or fat employed in greasing such kind of leather, asserting that it keeps it always pliable and soft.

A NEW MOTIVE POWER.—Ammonia has been put to use by G. Bastianelli, of Florence, as a motive power. It acts in the same manner as steam, and is as easily controlled, and requires but a small amount of fuel to develop its immense force, the heat necessary for producing the pressure of ten atmospheres being limited to 130 deg. to 140 deg. Fahrenheit, and can now, it is said, be readily adapted to any machinery worked by steam, the new engine being quite simple in its construction. The saving of fuel is nearly seventy per cent. The complicated copper boiler, with its 150 tubes, is entirely dispensed with. The ammonia acts in continuous rotation, as it at once condenses and returns into the boiler, the quantity escaping being observable, and requiring only annual replacement. If so, coal has looked its blackest at an all, and its price will gradually get more benign to our wants. Ammonia, as a motive power, is a very old acquaintance, and is said to have failed on account of its danger.

EGYPTIAN BUILDINGS.—All the great temples of Egypt which have withstood the destructive tendencies of time and the assaults of man for four thousand years are of hewn stones. But the only wood in or about them is in the form of ties, holding the end of one stone to another on its upper surface. When two blocks were laid in place then it appears that an excavation about an inch deep was made in each block, into which an hour-glass-shaped tie was driven. It is therefore very difficult to force any stone from its position. The ties appear to have been the tamarisk, or chittim wood, of which the ark was constructed, a sacred tree in ancient Egypt, and now very rarely found in the valley of the Nile. These dovetail ties are just as sound now as on the day of their insertion. Although fuel is extremely scarce in that country, these bits of wood are not large enough to make it an object with Arabs to heave off layer after layer of heavy stone for so small a prize. Had they been of bronze, half the old temples would have been destroyed years ago, so precious would they have been for various purposes.

CURIOSITIES OF COAL.

An average Atlantic steamer consumes fifty tons of coal in twenty-four hours. Therefore, if five tons of coal are sufficient to feed an ordinary grate in our dwellings during the entire year, the coal consumed on board a steamer in one day would last a small family, burning one fire, ten years.

If a load of coal is left out of doors exposed to the weather until it is burned up in one grate, say a month, it loses one third of its heating quality.

If a ton of coal is dumped on the ground and left there, and another load is under a shed, the latter loses about twenty-five per cent. of its heating power, the former about forty-seven per cent. Hence it is a great saving of coal to have it in a dry place, covered over, and on all sides.

The softer the coal the more it loses, because the most volatile and valuable constituents undergo a slow combustion.

RED HELM.

CHAPTER XIII.

Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how great the happiness!

Strongly it bears us along in swelling and limitless billows.

The saints will aid if men will call,
For the blue sky bends over all.

The young woman at once led the way toward the cabin, which, having entered, she went to the pantry and procured a small quantity of meat and some biscuits, which she spread upon the table.

Instantly the men, seeing the meat and tearing it to pieces, ate voraciously and with a rapidity which made Faith afraid they would choke to death.

She procured a pitcher of water, which she also placed before them, and of its contents they drank greedily, emptying it in a few moments and calling for more.

Faith supplied them from a large filter which con-

tained a good quantity, and stood watching them with the most intense satisfaction as they relieved their wants.

Having soon cleared the table, the man who had answered the young woman's hail turned to her and thanked her warmly.

"Have you not more?" said he. "The fact is we are so hungry from long deprivation that we could make away with three times as much as we have done."

"Yes, I doubt it not," answered she, "but do you not know that after being so long deprived of food you should not eat much at once? It would kill you."

"No, no! meat, meat! Give us more!" clamoured the first speaker's shipmates.

"Hush!" said the former, who seemed to hold a position of authority over the others, "it is as the young lady says. We will lie down and take a nap first, and when we wake up we can have more to eat."

Two of the men grumbled, but the rest looked satisfied, while the wistful glances of all were directed towards the pantry. They had eaten enough to temporarily satisfy them and now nature strongly craved sleep.

Ere Faith could bid them go forward and find bunks in the fore-cabin they had thrown themselves down on the floor and were dropping to sleep.

The young woman then directed a glance towards Brenton, who was now buried in deep slumber. Then she went on deck.

"How the poor fellows did eat!" said Mrs. Brown, sympathizingly.

"Yes, they have tasted no food for many days," answered Faith, "and I was afraid they would harm themselves by eating too much."

"They ought to have a good cup of tea," said Mrs. Brown.

"Yes, and they shall have it if I have to make it for them," said Faith.

"I will make it while you steer the ship," said Mrs. Brown.

With womanly promptitude she at once entered the galley, and proceeded to make a large pot of tea—the best the ship afforded.

Meanwhile Faith continued at the helm, although there was not much to do there with the halliards down and the ship fast to the whale.

At length she went below to find Brenton awake and so much better that he insisted on getting up and going on deck.

When there he asked Faith about the men in the cabin, whom he had just caught a glimpse of as he emerged through the companion-way, his face having then been turned toward the spot where they lay.

The young woman soon explained.

"I am glad they are here," said Brenton, "as they will help work the ship."

"Yes; and I hope our troubles will soon be all over. We can work the ship to the island where we left the captain and his men, whom we can then take aboard, after which we will proceed on our course."

"Yes, and I hope that, ere we reach the Indies, we may fall in with some English homeward-bound craft, for your sake."

"Will you go to England too?" inquired Faith, in a tremulous voice.

"Yes, I have no particular home," he added, "and can therefore make it in one place as well as in another."

"You have no relatives, then? No person who—"

"No—no relatives at all," interrupted Brenton; "neither father, mother, brother nor sister. All are dead, even to my uncles and cousins."

The young man spoke half sadly, and the brown eyes of Faith were turned softly on him, watching every expression of his handsome face.

"I will be a sister to you," she at length said, timidly.

Brenton started and looked at her earnestly.

"A sister, and no more?" he said, with emphasis, and in a half-disappointed tone.

A vivid blush mantled neck, cheek and brow of the young girl.

"Yes," she said, in a scarcely audible voice, unconsciously stealing nearer to him as she spoke. "Yes, I will be everything to you, if so you wish."

"Ah, a thousand times yes!" he exclaimed, clasping one of her little hands in both of his; "that would make me one of the happiest men alive!"

Then he drew her to his bosom.

"You will be mine?" said he. "You will be my wife?"

"Yes," she answered, her cheek on his shoulder. She gently disengaged herself, and Brenton, understanding her, forbore to repeat his embrace.

The next moment Mrs. Brown emerged from the galley.

Brenton then went amidships, and stood looking at the whale alongside.

"You say the men were on this monster's back?"

he remarked, when Faith and the captain's wife joined him.

"Yes,"

"They must have had a hard time of it there," said the young man. "Especially during the late gale. It is a marvel they were not washed away."

The castaways did not wake until after midnight. The moment they rose they found the table spread with a plentiful repast, and Mrs. Brown's tea smoking hot on the cabin stove.

Sitting down, they now ate and drank to satisfy themselves, after which they went on deck to there find Faith, the captain's wife and Brenton.

It was a clear, moonlight night, and the sea far and near sparkled in the silver beams as it sown with thousands of stars, while the ship rippled as she drifted along fast to the whale with the current.

"Good-morning, shipmates," said Brenton, in that hearty, frank manner natural to him, "I am glad to see you on deck. You have had a hard time, I should judge, from what I have heard."

"Yes," answered the man who had previously spoken to Faith, "we have, and if you will listen to me I will tell you all about it."

Brenton at once stated that he should be glad to hear the story, whereupon the man soon gratified him and his companions.

"We were running along somewhere about here, a little farther to the south, perhaps, when the man at the masthead gave notice that there was a school of sperm whales ahead. We lowered five boats and were soon pulling with might and main, each boat's crew striving, as is the custom, to get ahead of the other."

"This happened, you see, about a week ago, aboard the whaling barque 'Marblehead,' to which craft we belong. We pulled a long distance from the ship when, while the whales were heading to leeward and we were after them, we were struck by a heavy gale which came pouncing on us with a fury I have seldom seen equalled, though I have followed the sea nearly forty years."

"The water breaking into our boats kept us constantly bailing, while it was as much as we could do in such a blow to keep the boat's head to the sea. The whales could no longer be seen, having vanished in the acid and rack of the mist to leeward. Even had they been visible we could not think of chasing them then, although I have seen it done in some pretty hard gales."

"But this was an uncommon one, as I have said. I have seldom seen a gale like it. In the sound and rack of the storm the boats were separated, and, night soon coming on, we could not see a hand before our faces. The water meanwhile was flying into the boat and wetting us through and through and keeping two men constantly bailing. We looked in vain for the ship's lights and for the lights of the other boats; a gloomy prospect seemed before us."

"At last, when dawn came, the gale abated, although there was still a heavy sea which tossed our boat about in a lively manner. Ourcoxswain, standing up, suddenly pointed ahead."

"What is it?" inquired.

"A whale, sir, right ahead. Not more than a mile off."

"At any other time this would have been cheerful news. Even as it was we could not resist the temptation to give chase and endeavor to capture the fellow, which was a large one, containing at least ninety barrels good sperm! As first officer of the boat I now addressed my men, leaving it to their decision whether or not we should pull after the leviathan."

"There was not much hesitation. They unanimously decided to give chase. Accordingly we made for the monster, and soon were fortunate enough to strike him. In a few hours we had killed him, and we then anchored alongside, hoping we might soon see the ship."

We were, however, doomed to be disappointed. Our boat having been damaged, for four days we were upon that whale, having, during that time, eaten nothing but a few biscuits and drunk three cups of water. You may, therefore, guess our feelings of joy when we saw your craft coming towards us."

When the whaleman had finished his recital Brenton made to him the proposal to help work the ship towards the island upon which had been left the captain of the vessel and his crew.

"Certainly," the man answered. "I would be an ungrateful lubber if I should refuse your request. Anything myself and men can do for you shall be gladly done."

"How about your whale?" inquired Brenton.

"We shall have to let him go adrift. Perhaps eventually he will fall into the hands of my shipmates."

The next day was clear, with a favourable wind.

All the canvas that could be made available aboard the ship was set and away she went on her course

for the island upon which the captain and his party had been left.

Mrs. Brown was overjoyed at the prospect of soon seeing her husband. She was evidently much devoted to him, and could not bear the thought of being away from him so long.

"Are you sure you can find the island?" she inquired of the young man.

"Yes," he answered. "I took the bearings carefully when we drifted away."

They were standing along at the rate of five or six knots an hour, and had left the Malay island far behind them, when suddenly the voice of one of the men was heard ringing through the ship:

"Sail—oh!"

"Where away?" inquired Brenton as he darted aloft, glass in hand.

"Two points off the lee bow!" was the answer.

The young man was soon aloft.

Directing his glass in the indicated direction, he soon made out the stranger to be one of the Malay schooners, heading directly towards him under a press of canvas.

This was discouraging.

Mrs. Brown, when she heard the news, wrung her hands, while even Faith showed more emotion than usual.

"Ay," said she, "they have a number of vessels, and doubtless there have been two or six craft in chase of us since we escaped."

"It is unfortunate," remarked Brenton. "Short-handed as we are, and with only one gun aboard, we cannot hope to do much against such an enemy."

"We cannot escape them either," said the whaling mate. "At the rate that fellow is sailing he must soon overtake us."

"Alas! fortune indeed seems against us," said Mrs. Brown. "I had thought our troubles were all at an end."

Meanwhile the Malay was coming up fast.

The ship was brought round and headed away from the pursuer, although it was plain that this was of little use, as she kept gaining, closing the water with her sharp bow like a knife.

Brenton loaded the gun forward, and, having charged it with old slugs and iron, had it wheeled aft and pointed toward the pursuer.

At length, when the latter was in range, he had a shot fired from a smaller piece, which he had found in the hold and had brought up.

The shot was well aimed. It struck the Malay's mainmast, and his mainmast was seen to go down by the run.

"A good shot!" said the whaling mate, rubbing his hands; "a few more like that would disable the fellow so that he could do us no damage."

A new mainmast, however, soon was rigged, and in spite of his utmost efforts Brenton could not hit him, although he fired six shots in succession.

Among the whalersmen there was an old grizzly fellow named Ben Lark.

This sailor had, for some time, been critically watching the movements of the young man.

Now he came aft and touched his cap.

"If you will give me a chance at that gun," said he, "I think I can do a little better at such target practice, seeing as I've been a gunner aboard a sloop-of-war and was with Nelson at Trafalgar."

"Ay, ay," answered Brenton. "I have never seen such service, my man, and am therefore willing to give you a trial."

The eyes of the old tar lighted up with grim satisfaction.

"If I do say it myself," said he, "I was reckoned one of the best gunners aboard the sloop, and I hope I haven't lost my skill."

So saying the speaker took his place at the gun, and, having carefully pointed it, he aimed the match.

Watching the Malay craft, the spectators were surprised to see her mainmast go to splinters.

"Well done!" cried Brenton; "a few more shots like that and away goes the fellow's head-gear!"

Again the old tar, after the gun had been loaded, placed himself at the piece and fired.

Unfortunately, the piece being an old one, it now exploded, and the sailors narrowly escaped injury, some of the iron fragments flying within an inch of them, and others passing to leeward and falling, with hissing noise into the sea.

"There is the other gun left to us, at all events," said Brenton.

The old sailor, Ben Lark, inspected the piece narrowly.

"It has a large crack in it," said he; "it may or may not explode at the first fire!"

"You think, then, we could fire one shot?" inquired Brenton.

"I'm not sure," answered Lark; "it has a bad look, and aboard a war craft would have been condemned long since."

Brenton gazed wistfully toward the Malay vessel.

"I wish we could fire her one more shot," said he. "I'll try it," answered Ben, resolutely; "it is worth risking, especially with these aboard," glancing at the two women.

"If it should burst you would probably perish!" cried Faith. "No, no—I would not advise you to risk firing that shot."

"I'm an old hulk," answered Ben, "and my life is worth nothing in comparison to yours and others. Stand clear, all of you, and I'll fire that shot!"

"No!" exclaimed Brenton. "You shall point the gun; then stand out of harm's way while I fire."

The old sailor shook his head.

"If anybody fires the piece it must be me, sir. It may not explode after all; so stand clear, I say, all hands!"

Brenton, however, would not consent to this.

He waited until the old sailor had pointed the gun; then in an authoritative voice he bade him stand aside.

The old sailor obeyed reluctantly; but Faith now threw herself between her lover and the piece.

"Nay!" she exclaimed, "you must not run this risk. The gun will explode—I am sure of it, and—"

A shot came howling along from the Malay, and, striking the ship's fore-yard, this was seen to fly to splinters.

Mrs. Brown, who stood near Faith, instinctively clasping her round the waist, drew her away.

At the same moment Brenton, who, although the splinters were flying round him in all directions, stood cool and unmoved, applied the match to the gun.

The piece thundered, and, as had been expected, exploded, but, fortunately for him who had fired the shot, into only three pieces, which flew whistling over his head and fell into the sea.

Nevertheless the shot was not without its effect. It struck the Malay's foremast and sent it crashing by the board.

"Good!" exclaimed Brenton, grasping the old tar by the hand. "This is your work!"

"And mighty glad I am, sir," answered Lark, "that the gun didn't do you any mischief when it exploded."

Faith came up and looked closely at the young man, as if to make sure he was not hurt.

"Not a scratch," said she. "Heaven be praised!"

"It was fortunate," said the whaling mate. "I would not have run such a risk for anything."

"Nor I," echoed the second officer, who was near.

"What do you think now?" inquired Mrs. Brown.

"Can they overtake us?"

"I am afraid they can," said Brenton. "They are even now repairing damages, which would not hinder their overtaking us, as they carry more canvas than we do."

The man at the helm was ordered to do his best; but, although a good steersman, Faith could perceive that in this respect he was far inferior to herself.

Accordingly she took the helm, when each sailor aboard declared that he had never seen a ship headed on such a straight line before.

By this time, however, the Malays had rigged another mast and set more canvas, so that their vessel gained rapidly on the other craft.

"Could we not escape by trying the dangerous passage again?" inquired Mrs. Brown.

"If we could reach it without being overtaken we might do so," replied Faith, "but I doubt if we can get there in time."

Brenton, meanwhile, was issuing orders to the men under his command.

Some canvas and spare spars having been brought up from the hold, a jury-mast was rigged forward and furnished with a foretopsal, which drew well, sending the vessel along with accelerated speed.

In fact the merchantman now almost "held her own," and Faith had strong hopes that she would be able to reach the rocky channel in time to pass through.

She communicated her intention to Brenton, who, with the others, approved of it.

"If we can get through," said Faith, "and I see no reason why I may not do a second time what I have done before, I have no doubt that we can leave our pursuer, who will probably not dare to attempt the channel. While he is talking about to weather the line of rocks we may be able to leave him out of sight."

All aboard now watched the Malay intently as she came on, with all her canvas set, flinging the water away from her bows.

The merchantman meanwhile made good progress and her crew felt hopeful.

Suddenly a heavy puff of wind came from the north-west, and away went the jury-mast!

"The Malay gains too fast for us now!" cried Faith. "The passage is still a league ahead."

Even as Faith made this remark the Malay's speed slackened, showing that the wind had died away in her vicinity.

"That is good for us," exclaimed Brenton, "but I'm afraid the lull will be of short duration."

"Yes, there is a puff of wind wrinkling the water in her vicinity already," said Faith.

When half an hour had passed the Malay was again within easy range, and fired several shots, which flew whistling about the spars and rigging of the merchantman, though, fortunately, without doing any damage.

Faith headed well up for the passage, which was now but a mile ahead.

Could she once reach that she felt that her escape was sure.

But she had doubts that she would be able to do so, as the shots from the pursuing craft were now falling thick and fast.

On came the pursuer, and now one of her shots, striking the mainmast of the other craft, sent it flying soon into splinters.

The merchantman could not be well steered with a portion of the wreck hanging over her side, and it seemed as if she must soon fall into the power of her enemy, who was now scarcely half a mile from her, her decks and rigging alive with the dusky crew, who split the air with their shouts.

One tall fellow was seen at the topmast waving his forecap wildly about his head.

"That is Bolak!" exclaimed Faith, "unless I am much mistaken! Heaven help us if we fall into the hands of that fellow!"

On came the Malay, while the other craft made scarcely any headway.

"I am almost sorry we were picked up now!" said the whaling mate.

"We must do the best we can," said Brenton, firmly. "Few as we are we can at least fight to the last."

The Malay soon was within speaking distance.

"Ha!" screamed Bolak from the mainmast, "we have you now!"

"We show no quarter," screamed a stout Malay, waving his sword about his head. "We cut into many pieces! Ha! ha!"

The captain's wife, Mrs. Brown, stood white and trembling by the rail.

"We are lost! lost!" she moaned, wringing her hands. "I shall never see my husband again!"

"Do not despair!" cried Faith. "I have thought of a stratagem which may succeed."

"And what is that?" inquired Brenton.

"The rocky passage is but a quarter of a mile distant!" answered the young woman, "and the current is rapidly carrying us towards it. If we can only put these fellows off for a short time, we may yet succeed in getting the ship through."

"Ay, but how is that to be done?" queried Brenton.

"Leave that to me," answered Faith.

So saying she mounted the poop, trumpet in hand, fully disclosing herself to the enemy.

"Ha!" screamed Bolak, in surprise at seeing this person, whom he had not dreamed was aboard the merchantman. "So we found you at last."

"Yes, but we have something to say to you, Bolak, which you may like to hear."

"Speak! speak!" cried the Malay, eagerly, his bloodshot eyes turned wistfully upon the speaker.

"What you want to say? You consent to be my wife?"

"There is no help for it!" she answered, greatly to the dismay of Brenton. "Yes. If you will agree to spare the people aboard here and not molest them farther I will consent to go aboard your craft."

"Me get you whether you come or not," cried the giant, exultingly. "You in my power."

"No, for I will put an end to my life before you come aboard, unless you promise to let this ship and her people go free."

Bolak shrugged his shoulders.

"And if me consent, you will come aboard?"

"Yes."

"It is well. Me give my word."

"Then have your craft up into the wind that I may come aboard in the boat."

As she spoke she pointed towards the damaged boat which had been occupied by the whalersmen as they lashed themselves to the whale, and which had since been taken aboard and repaired.

"It is well," answered Bolak.

So saying he gave orders to his dusky crew, who soon backed the foreyard.

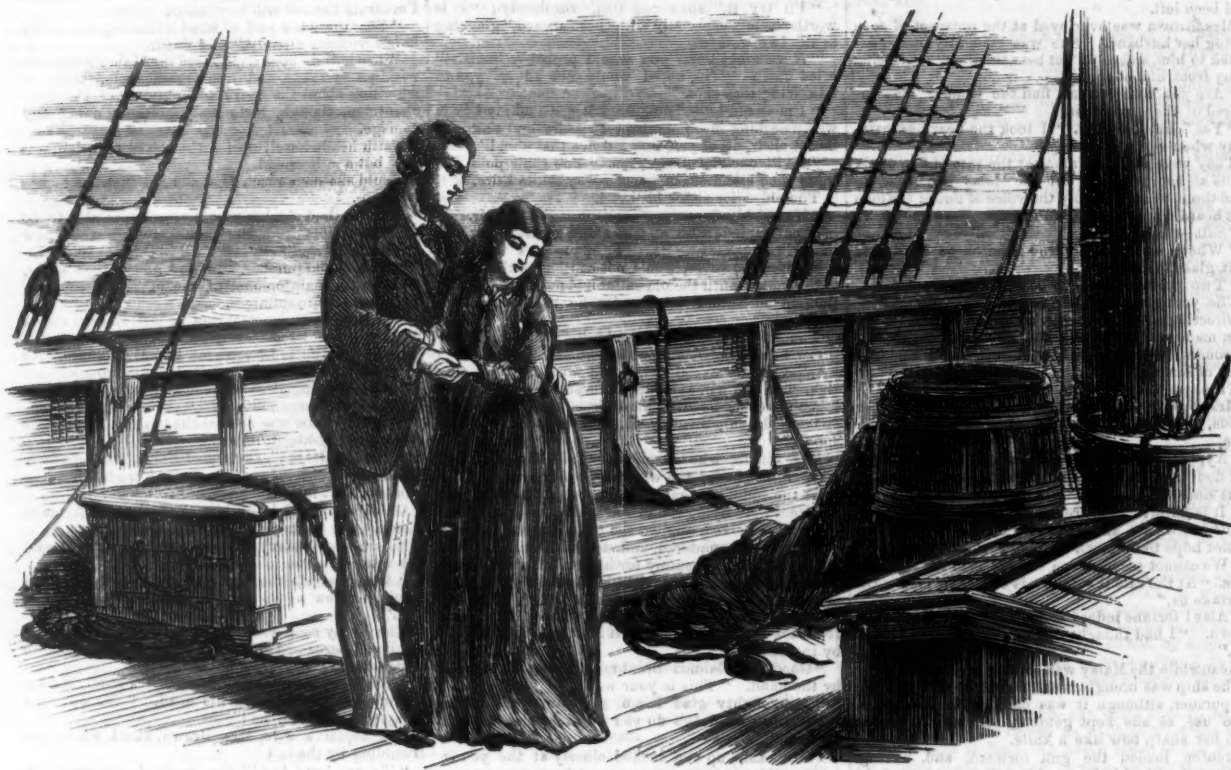
"Faith, what means that? Do you really intend to go?" inquired Brenton, as the girl motioned to her companions to lower the boat.

"No," she replied; "but I intend to have the boat lowered that Bolak may suspect nothing."

"And what do you really intend to do?" queried Brenton.

"You will see," she answered.

No sooner was the boat lowered than the young woman, suddenly seizing the helm, which she had



[THE FLIGHTED TROTH.]

relinquished to one of the men, directed the ship into a strong current which drew her rapidly towards the passage.

"There, keep her as she is," whispered she to the same man who had previously held the wheel.

Then she walked to the gangway and descended into the boat, having previously instructed the whalermen to follow her.

They did so, and Faith now bade them seize their oars and pull ahead.

This was done—Brenton, however, taking care that the warp should not be cast off the pin.

"There, that will do!" exclaimed the young girl, "now we can go aboard again!"

The boat was pulled alongside, and its occupants taken aboard amid the shouts of the Malays, who now understood the deception which had been practised on them.

To seize the helm and guide the rapidly drifting ship straight for the passage now was with Faith the work of a moment.

The Malays pursued as far as they dared, but would not trust themselves to the current which the young girl had so fearlessly entered.

On went the ship, while shot after shot from the Malay came howling through her rigging.

Meanwhile Faith standing calm and fearless at the helm guided the ship on her perilous way, and eventually, though with greater difficulty than before, succeeded in passing through the channel.

"We are safe now!" she cried, as her lover came admiringly to her side.

"I never saw anything like it!" said he. "No person but yourself could have guided the craft safely through such a place."

The whalermen applauded her skill with cheers, directing many an admiring glance upon the fair pilot. "The first thing to do now is to repair damages," said she, looking up at the stump of the main-mast.

"Ay, that's true," said Brenton; "and we will go about it at once."

He did so, and the ship soon was running along under jury-masts, dead before the wind, fast leaving astern the Malay, who by lacking was making vain endeavours to weather the dangerous line of rocks.

By the morning of the next day the ship had made good progress to the south, and was standing along under all the canvas she could bear.

Dark clouds, however, had now gathered, and the wind was hauling ahead so that Faith soon was obliged to tack.

Thus the vessel now stood along about north by west, which carried her nearer to the Malay island than was at all relished by Faith.

"I am afraid this wind is going to hold," she said to Brenton.

"So am I," he answered; "but if we can continue to bear up well towards the west I have hopes that we may yet succeed in keeping clear."

The wind, however, kept hauling more ahead, knocking the craft off at an alarming rate.

By noon the dim shores of the island were in sight, and men were sent aloft to watch for suspicious sails.

Not long were they there when their voices were simultaneously heard.

"Sail, ho!"

"Where away?" queried Brenton.

"Two sails—one to windward and the other to leeward," was the response.

"What do they look like?"

"Can't make out very well, sir, but think one of them is a Malay."

Brenton mounted the rigging, and with his glass narrowly inspected the two sails.

One of them, as he had feared, was a Malay, and the other also looked like one, although, being so far away to leeward and half concealed by the mist in that quarter, he could not ascertain to a certainty.

"If they are both enemies," muttered the young man, "we cannot hope to escape."

He remained aloft watching the two vessels until at last a thick mist hid them from sight.

"Well?" inquired Faith, when at length Brenton descended from aloft.

"We had better keep off," said the young man. "One vessel evidently is a Malay and in search of us. The other I know nothing about. We had better make toward the one about which we know nothing."

"Yes, it may prove a friend," said his fair companion.

Accordingly they stood toward the stranger and were making good headway when suddenly the wind showed signs of hauling round.

This knocked the vessel off several points, giving the Malay, with her good supply of canvas, an advantage.

On she came like a sea-gull, scooping up the waves and gaining fast.

The whalermen looked despondent, and even Faith turned slightly pale.

"That vessel," said she, after surveying it for a moment through the glass, "belongs to one not less cruel than Bolak. Heaven help us if we fall into his power."

"We must hope for the best," said Brenton; "we have escaped so far, and I do not think we shall be so unfortunate as to be caught at last."

"Meanwhile," said Faith, "the other vessel having the wind in her favour may come up in time to save us, provided she prove a friend."

All aboard kept their gaze upon the other craft, and as she drew nearer they felt sure by her appearance that she was an English vessel.

But while they were watching her a thick fog, which had gradually been gathering, settled on the water and veiled her from sight.

They kept on as they had been doing, directing the vessel as close to the wind as possible, while look-outs were posted in various parts of the ship.

Meanwhile, the wind hauling still more ahead, the merchantman, with her scant supply of canvas, made little progress.

Suddenly one of the look-outs ran to Brenton, saying he heard the noises of ropes and yards in the mist.

"Where away?" inquired the young man.

"About two points off the weather bow," was the response.

"It is the Malay!" said Brenton, as he sprang on the knighthead and peered through the mist.

"Can you see her?" queried Faith.

"No, but I hear her!" answered the young man. In fact the noise of blocks and yards was now plainly distinguished.

Faith went to the helm, and there, with her usual composure, always shown in emergencies, she stood and directed the craft upon her course.

Brenton had never seen such good steering, and he showed his admiration, as did the rest of the men.

As steadily as on a bee line, with her canvas just lifted, the vessel glided on her way, making as much progress as was possible under the circumstances.

Meanwhile the noise made by the rushing of the Malay's bows through the water now could be heard, and the spectators looked anxiously, expecting every moment to get sight of her masts and yards.

At last these were visible, looming up through the fog.

Nearer drew the enemy every moment, her dusky crew, with their tiger-yellow faces, thronging about the rail and gazing towards the merchantman, the sight of which seemed to inspire them with demoniacal exultation.

Their wild shouts were splitting the air, when the report of a gun was heard, followed by the crashing of a heavy shot, which struck the ship under the counter.

The water, with ominous, gushing sound, was heard pouring into the hold.

She was sinking.

(To be continued.)



[THE FORCED SLEEP.]

THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIX.

Why quak'st thou so?
Cause thou straight must lay thy head
In the dust? Ah, no;
The dust shall never be thy bed.
A pillow for thee will I bring
Stuffed with down of angel's wing.

The last notes of the last air in "La Traviata" had resounded in the vast opera-house at the fair Italian city on the final night of the season.

Norma d'Albano, the famed prima donna, had sung the sweetest and most thrilling notes that had ever escaped even her siren lips. Indeed, the most critical and enthusiastic of her admirers believed that she surpassed herself on that memorable farewell.

"It is wonderful—admirable," they said. "One would think she breathed her very heart out in the thrilling, pensive sweetness of the mournful dying scene. And she looked something strange, unearthly, spirit-like. It is enough to haunt one for days and weeks," they continued, with all the imaginative impetuosity of the Southern temper. "The 'Norma' is an angel of song, a very goddess. Pray Heaven she is not going to her natural sphere," they went on, in their musical accents, and with eyes uplifted in all the liquid richness of the deep, almond-shaped orbs which are indigenous to that soft clime.

Perhaps the acting was as marvellous as the music, for, as the unhappy heroine was supposed to breathe her last, Norma's impersonation of the dying scene was so terribly true to nature that it was well nigh impossible to believe in its being merely the acting of even that celebrated cantatrice, and as she was borne away from the stage the illusion was but too fearfully entranced.

"Saints and angels! she is really gone!" exclaimed the assistants as they at length laid her on a couch in the green-room and bent over her in growing terror. "Call for help. Where is the Signor Mantoni? Perhaps it is but a fainting fit after all. Hark! the applause is deafening. They are calling for her. What can be done?"

It was true.

The uproar in the opera-house was simply overwhelming, bewildering.

Shouts, cries, stamping of feet, showers of bouquets cast on the stage where the prima donna ought to have been, all betokened the half-delicious furies the fair young creature had created.

But she was deaf and insensible to it all. She lay unconscious and apparently lifeless—oblivious of the excited shouts of her admirers.

The closed eyes and the pale cheeks, the pallid lips and the motionless limbs all spoke of the utter insensibility to praise or blame, to sorrow or to joy.

"This is fearful," said the manager, Signor Mantoni, when after an apology to the audience he returned to the room where Norma lay. "What can be done? A physician could do her little good perhaps here. Is there one of her friends, I mean her own personal friends or relatives, in the house who could take charge of the signorita to her home, and see that she has proper advice and care? I would have given a thousand pounds rather than it should have happened, and on this last night too."

"Perhaps I can relieve the signor of some of his trouble," said a voice behind, and, turning to identify the speaker, the ubiquitous Eustace Villiers presented himself. "I am a very old friend, indeed I might say a relative of the signorita," he said, "or, to be more correct, a relative of her relatives, and I will be responsible for her proper care and tending if you will confide her to me. Indeed it would be too great a charge for you to undertake, in any case, signor, with all your weighty affairs on your mind."

"Signor, you are most gracious; I will avail myself of your offer," said the manager, blandly. "It is fortunate that this attack did not take place earlier in the season. No doubt it is occasioned by over-excitement and exhaustion and will soon be remedied by rest. Shall we send for a physician," he continued, "or do you think it better to convey the signorita to her home ere she is subjected to medical treatment?"

"I think it will be better to take her home at once. We can put cushions in the carriage, and I will of course accompany her thither, then attendants and the best doctor in Naples shall be summoned at once," replied Eustace. "Her maid is here I dare say?" he continued, inquiringly.

"No, not yet; she always accompanies the Signorita Norma, but when her mistress's toilet is over she leaves till the carriage is ordered, and it is perhaps scarcely the time for her return, though I am rather surprised she has not yet arrived," was the reply.

"Then we will not wait. Should she come after our departure you will perhaps desire her to follow us as quickly as possible to the house," said Eustace, blandly.

"Now we will lose no more time."

The manager was but too ready to comply; in fact it might be doubted whether his true Italian horror of death did not weigh most completely over his more chivalrous and grateful feelings to his treasured prima donna.

And thus the insensible girl was conveyed to her apartments under the direction and care of him on whom she had most earnestly depended for every look and word that should decide her destiny, while the throng she had been entrancing with her syren notes slowly dispersed in gloomy silence.

Norma had been laid on her couch, and every exertion that skill or care could suggest used for her restoration.

But in vain.

No movement, no pulse even, rewarded either the physician or the anxious efforts of Eustace himself.

And at length the doctor turned despairingly from the task.

"It is difficult to decide in these cases of extreme and sudden syncope and exhaustion," he said, at length. "But I am inclined to fear that the vital spark has fled—still the better plan, as it seems to me, would be for the maid or nurse, or any one who can be trusted, to remain with the signorita during the night, and I will leave medicines and proper directions in case of her recovery. Indeed I shall hold myself in readiness to be summoned should it be needful, or, I should say, should I happily be found likely to be of use," he continued. "I deeply grieve that such a light as this should be thus extinguished, as it were, in its very dawn."

He took his leave as he spoke.

And then Eustace was alone with the dead—for dead she seemed to be, without hope or sign of life or animation.

She was pale, lifeless, motionless as a corpse; and as such given over by the first physician in Naples.

Eustace called the maid with a grave sadness suited to the occasion.

"See," he said, "Juana, you must watch by your lady all night. And to enable you to do this without exhaustion you should drink this cordial, which will endow you with wonderful power and energy. I shall be here again soon after daybreak, and should you find it necessary you will only have to ring a bell to summon assistance, which I shall take care will be near at hand," he went on, observing the girl's half-terrified glance.

Juana had no choice but to obey.

She drank the pleasant, stimulating cordial, and a grateful warmth and animation did certainly pass through her chilled and trembling body.

"There, establish yourself in that chair, my good girl. I will stay a few minutes till I hear the approach of the man whom I shall station to be in readiness, and then leave you for the brief remainder of the night."

"You are very good, very gracious, signor," said the girl, falteringly. "And it does go to my very heart that my poor lady should be so ill, as one might almost say dead—for I don't think there's any life in her. She's looked very ill for weeks past, and I only hope she hasn't killed herself with all the excitement of the work and the fame," she said, shrugging her shoulders, "and at her age too."

Sinking into her chair, she gave way to a relieving burst of tears, and then prepared, as it seemed, to settle down for the night and watch.

Eustace passed into the next room and drew the door after him, though without closing it. But though it was after his movements were so cautious that even Juana could not have decided on their nature.

There might be a slight jingle as of the turning of a key, a faint, soft noise as of drawing open a drawer, but so slow, so cautious and so velvet-like in sound that it would have been impossible even for the keen watcher in that silent chamber to swear to their nature, or their very existence.

Then after a while even those faint sounds were hushed. A stillness as of "Death or its brother Sleep" reigned.

Juana's eyes closed dreamily. She knew that it was contrary to her duty, but yet she could not resist the drowsy god. She tossed up from time to time with a strange vision in her brain that was like to a dream and yet too vivid and wild for a mere caprice of sleep.

She fancied there were figures, sounds, voices, but still she was locked in sleep as by a nightmare that she could not resist or break through.

But at last it ceased. She seemed to lose the formless whirl of objects and fancies and sounds and to sink at last into a sound, refreshing slumber.

Nor was she roused till she felt a hand on her shoulder and saw the dark features of Eustace Villiers bending over her, and heard his voice asking, sternly:

"Woman, in this your duty, this the way in which you fulfil your sacred trust?"

Juana started and gazed wildly up at the speaker. Her faculties were too bewildered for her to comprehend for a few moments the situation in which she found herself.

The dawn of a bright Italian morning was fighting up the apartment, even piercing through the green jealousies that shaded the chamber of death.

Juana gazed wildly at her unchanged attire, then at the angry features of Eustace Villiers sternly regarding her.

By slow degrees the remembrance of the past night dawned upon her with all its pregnant events, and she turned eagerly towards the couch.

"Where is she? Is she better, my dear mistress?" she gasped, passing her hand over her eyes as if to clear her vision.

"Better!" he repeated, sternly. "Unhappy, guilty woman, do you wish to cloak your wickedness and guilt? Dare you tell me that you have no knowledge of what has happened; that you have yielded to your animal sloth and indolence so entirely? Or are you even more guilty in a deliberate connivance at the terrible deed?"

Juana was fully roused, fully awake now. "Speak, speak, signor, for mercy's sake!" she gasped. "What do you mean? What has happened? Where is she?" she went on, wildly, as her her now clearer vision perceived that the bed was empty.

"Where? Woman, it is for you to answer that question," said Eustace, bitterly. "The signorita has been conveyed away during the night, or rather her body, for I cannot doubt that life had departed, that she was indeed a senseless corpse when I left her in your charge."

Juana sprang up and rushed to the bed.

It was but too true. The pillow was there with the mark that had been pressed by the delicate head which rested there a brief space since, the bed-clothes had actually been smoothed and replaced so that no trace of the removal of the slight form could be perceived.

All was there as if the mistress of the apartment were still reposing on its soft down.

But it was void. No living thing was there to vary the smooth line of the coverlet.

And the girl stood with her dark eyes too full of distended horror to allow one suspicion of her guilty knowledge of the abduction to reasonably enter the mind.

"Oh, signor, signor, how dreadful! What can be done?" she said, clasping her hands piteously. "It is some enemy who has done this. Yet, the saints protect me! I never heard a sound nor had sight of any such crime."

"Are you sure? Can you swear it?" asked Eustace, significantly.

The remembrance of the wild visions of the night did bring a more doubtful look to the eyes, a more guilty flush to the cheek of the Italian, but she answered, firmly:

"I am—I will. There were dreams and sounds in my sleep, but as I am a living woman I never knowingly heard or saw any such crime committed. I would have died before I would have let my dear young mistress be taken away like that. To think that she may not even have been buried nor hear the last sacraments," she added, with a look of horror. "She so good and generous, and she never missed mass on Sundays, even if she had been ever so late on Saturday night at the opera, and then to be buried and die like a heroic or a heathen, which is almost as bad."

Juana wrung her hands in wailing grief and despair.

"Peace, woman—peace. Don't make that disturbance now when it's too late," said Eustace, angrily. "It will but damage yourself in every way," he added, more quickly. "It will be better to confess in me, and I will see whether it is not possible to stand your friend in this very dangerous contingency."

Juana gazed piteously at him.

"Ah, signor, surely you cannot doubt me," she said. "You cannot think I would be so wicked when my dear lady was so good to me? On my honour—my very soul—I do not know anything about it. I went to sleep, I cannot tell how, and never wake up till you came, and if I were to be hung for it I cannot say anything else."

"It would be a great pity if you had to be hung, my good girl," he returned, gravely. "Of course there may be some danger of a wrong lady like the Signorita Norma is concerned, who is so well known and so admired. Are you ready to swear to that?" he said, looking sharply at her—so closely fixed that the shadow passed under the penetrating look, though the eyes did not quail, and Eustace in his heart secretly could doubt her truth. "Is there anybody you suspect, any one who has been at all in the habit of coming here, or of meeting your lady?" he asked, insinuatingly.

"No one except my Lord Neville," she said, "and he has not been near the house for many a week and more."

He winced under the name, which brought more unpleasant pangs to his heart than the maid could imagine.

"Then," he returned, "you are actually adding to your own danger, my good girl. If there is no one else who could have done this strange deed—it is certain that it was a physical impossibility for her to leave the apartment by herself—the Signorita Norma must have been conveyed hence, either dead or alive, under your own connivance and arrangement. For so distinguished a character as the signorita you may be certain that every possible inquiry will be made, and punishment inflicted on some one, whether justly or unjustly," he added, significantly.

"Then what would you have me do? What can be the end of it?" said the sultry Juana. "I am innocent, signor, innocent as a babe of any wrong against my dear lady, and it would be cruel indeed to hold me responsible for what I cannot help," she replied, almost speechless with anger, terror, and grief, that choked the soft native tongue till it became well nigh guttural under the hoarse emotion of the moment.

"I will tell you what you can do, or rather what I will do for you," he said, soothingly. "I have a strong belief in your actual innocence, Juana, although you are deeply culpable for your negligence in the charge entrusted to you. And," he went on, slowly, and watching each moment the effect of his words as they dropped from his lips; "therefore, should you be worthy of the trouble and the responsibility that I must assume, I will give you the means of escaping this painful inquiry, and concealing yourself till the burst of popular indignation and scandal shall have passed over. It is perhaps scarcely to be justified," he went on, musingly, "still, under the circumstances, and for her sake, I might encounter the risk."

Juana hesitated.

"But how?" she said, "where? My native place is near this fair city, and though I am an orphan still I should be pained to leave it; and then I am poor and unfriended. I have but a year's wages or so, and there were some six months' salary due from the poor signorita, but then it would not keep me for a month, and with no character too. No, no—I cannot go, signor. Thank you for the offer, but—I cannot."

"Then you must take the penalty, headstrong girl, and I may give some proofs that will only make your guilt more certain," he said, angrily. "Obey; there is no time to lose. If I remain longer all chance of tracing the crime will be over, and my own share in

the miserable affair be subject to blame. Till I return you will be in custody," he went on, as he took a step towards the door.

Juana waited till he had well nigh reached it, and then her courage seemed to give way, and she sprang forward, and threw herself on the ground between him and the portal of that fatal apartment.

"No, no," she exclaimed, impetuously. "Do not go, signor, I implore, I entreat. I will do all, everything. I dare not—I will not be brought into such a terrible danger."

He extended his hand to her with a kind of paternalizing pity.

"You are wise—but only just in time," he said. "And there is not a moment to be lost in completing the arrangements. See," he added; "the day will soon have fully broken and all Naples will be astir. I dare not delay the announcement of this extraordinary occurrence longer than another half-hour. Hasten, then—collect anything you have that you wish to preserve, and then go to the address I will give you, where you will be perfectly safe for the time being. Then, as the day wears on, I shall be able to join you and make further arrangements for your flight. In twenty-four hours from this time you shall be far from Naples; in a week you will, if needful, be in another land in perfect safety."

Juana dared not argue the point.

Her lips moved, her steps lingered as if against her very will. But there was something in his warning—something in that irresistible spell that ever attended his wonderful eyes, which guided her movements well on in spite of herself.

She slowly and noiselessly descended the stairs, and in a few minutes had left the house, where wearied inmates were still sleeping till they should be aroused by the varied clang of convent and church and house bells.

Eustace calmly waited to catch the last sound of her retreating steps ere he commenced a brief but searching search in the deserted chamber.

There were small and promising jewel cases, there were pockets that might contain secrets or money in their recesses.

And he spared neither one nor the other in his keen appropriations of the chosen articles of the unhappy Norma's collection.

Pockets and deeper recesses still were stuffed to the utmost as he had exhausted the treasures, and yet it was not half an hour from his first entrance into the room ere he issued from the house with a look and a step that well accorded with the news he carried from its doors.

CHAPTER IX.

What bright, soft things is this,
Sweet Mary, thy fair eyes express?
A moist spark it is—
A wat'ry diamond—from thence,
That very tear, I think, was found
The water of a diamond.

MR. HERRIES could not be found. There was nothing so very remarkable, perhaps, in the fact that a guest whose advent had been so unproteggid and so tardy should have left the Bockery in the same mysterious and silent manner. Nor might it even have been noticed by the host and hostess, or the gay and occupied throng, save for the prominence that had been given him by the distinguishing favour shown to him by the fair mistress of the domain, and Victor Mordant's especial call to receive him with honour and attention from her lips.

"Celia, when did Mr. Herries go? did he take leave of you?" asked Victor, in a low tone, as the rooms were emptying. "I looked for him with especial care, at your request, and I never even saw him leave the dining-room, nor enter the saloons."

"Really I cannot be responsible for the vagaries of my guests, especially in such a crowd as this, Victor," she returned, pettishly. "Perhaps he was tired of the affair, and when the great business of the evening was concluded he probably thought he was of no use or ornament either. It really is of no possible consequence."

"And is that your idea of a friend whom you so especially commended to my notice and care, Celia?" asked the young man, reproachfully.

"My dear cousin, for Heaven's sake do not be so critical when I am tired to death," said Celia, pettishly. "If a man cannot come to and go from a ball without being watched like a child or a fanatic, it is very absurd, that is all I have to say. I don't doubt he is safe in bed by this time, and I am sure I wish I were, for I am frightfully tired."

Victor could not urge more after such a plea, and Celia, after enduring for a brief space longer the fatigue of smiles and bows and extended hands, as her guests passed from the saloons, at length retired to her chamber with a winged feeling of exhaustion and yet relief that almost overpowered her frame.

"Safe," she murmured, "safe at last. Yes, I

can breathe freely. There can be no danger now— and Carlos shall be richly paid for his adroitness and insatiable arrangements. But I must be cautious," she murmured to herself. "Victor was strangely reproachable but now, and as to Laura even, there has been something rather significant in her tone and manner of late which I do not comprehend. Yet it is impossible, utterly impossible that I can be suspected by either. Pahaw! I must cast off this cowardice—as if I were to dread my own servant because she happens to wear a smile, or look intently at me! Celia Vyvian, you are a weak idiot!"

She rang the bell as she spoke for the very object of her speculations, and as Laura appeared with heavy lids and an ill-concealed inclination to yawn the dangers which had been conjured up where she was concerned vanished from the conscious mistress's mind.

"I shall not arouse you in the morning till a late hour, of course," she said, as she finished her duties; "and it might refresh you if I were to make for you a draught that the Lady Blith Brooks always had after a ball when I was her maid. It only needs some new milk and one or two other simple ingredients that I can easily procure and mix myself, if you will allow me, Miss Vyvian?"

"Yes, yes, as you like, only let me go to sleep now," she said, impatiently, and Laura left the room and soon sought her own more quiet and undisturbed slumbers.

"My Laura, my pretty one, how does you do to be up so soon after your late hours this morning, as I may call it?" said Jenkins, gallantly, as he encountered the lady of his love just entering the house from the more private side of the spacious grounds. "Don't you mind, I think, after all, it's nothing but to drive your admirer wild," he continued, with a look of admiration. "Why, the morning air has given you a colour like a rose with the dew on it, and, as to your eyes, they are—"

"Sharp enough to see a diamond when it lies in the way, before it shines," returned the girl, laughingly. Jenkins looked somewhat puzzled.

"Now I don't say I see the connection, pretty Laura," he said, "but I hope you don't call me a bear, and, as to biting, why, I know what I would like to do, if I'd the chance, that isn't too very different, perhaps," and he started forward as if to carry out the implied threat and attack the full lips of the blushing subject.

She drew back coquettishly, and he said, "No, no, Mr. Jenkins, it's not so easy to bring me to such ways, I can tell you," she said, with a pretty toss of her head, "and it wasn't that I meant at all. I can tell you I haven't been out for nothing this morning; that's certain, but it doesn't follow I should tell you what I've found."

"What you've found?" said Jenkins, eagerly. "Why, your little sassy jewel, what have you been after—what have you found out, I'd like to know?"

"It's what I'm going to keep," she said, "and a great deal more valuable than anything you could give me. What do you think of this?" she said, drawing from her dress a ring that, at the first glance, Jenkins could see was of glittering diamonds. "Nay, you shall not touch it, unless you promise me to give it me back directly," she added, drawing back as he pressed forward to look at the jewel.

"Of course I will," he said, impatiently. "Don't be foolish, Laura—I mean, don't play with a fellow like that. Do you think I'm a thief, Laura?"

"No, but it's best to take heed beforehand," she said, "when such a pretty thing as this is in the case. However, here it is; you can see it, if you like, Mr. Jenkins."

He eagerly availed himself of the permission and held the pretty bauble up to the light to stroll the sparkling rays.

The ring evidently belonged to a gentleman from the size of the setting, and it might be called, and had a monogram of sparkling diamonds in the centre, and at either end of the little tablet were two splendid opals, with tiny emeralds between these beautiful stones and the brilliant gold.

The whole effect was singularly dazzling, and Jenkins had sufficient experience in precious stones to believe the ring to be one of remarkable value.

"Where on earth did you find this, Laura?" he said, at length, after a prolonged investigation.

"Well, that's telling," she said, with a smile. "However, you're an old friend and I don't mind you, Mr. Jenkins, if you'll promise not to say anything to any one you see."

"That you may rely upon, unless there is some very good cause for doing so," he replied, in a tone that she could scarcely doubt. "I dare say it belonged to one of the great folks here last night, and there'll be a hue and cry for it if it did, you know," he added, winking.

"I don't see that," she returned, "for you know"

all the carriages came to and went from the grand entrance, as of course they were sure to do. And this ring was by the gate leading to my lady's especial garden, and withal in the private way that is hardly ever used except by Miss Celia herself or now and then Mr. Victor. I went this morning to get some downy milk, and one or two leaves that give it a nice flavour which grow near that gate, you see, Mr. Jenkins, or else I should not have been there nor seen the pretty thing at all."

Jenkins still held the ring in his hand, and now he placed it nearer to his eyes, and in a position where the light fell full upon the tiny stones forming the monogram, as he tried to decipher the letters that composed it and the curious and involved device.

Apparently he was rewarded for his pains; for a look of intense interest came over his features as he at last turned from the examination with a sigh of relief.

He returned it to Laura's hands with a look of hesitating reluctance, as if he would fain have retained, had he dared, the pretty and valuable trinket.

"Well, Mr. Jenkins, are you satisfied?" she said, at length, after the brief pause that succeeded the little incident.

The man did not reply for a moment. He had drawn the girl just within the shelter of his own parlour while they spoke, and he closed and firmly secured the door ere he again spoke.

"Mark ye, Laura," he said, in a serious, low tone, all unlike the manner he generally used towards the "lady of his love," "there is more in the loss and discovery of that jewel than a hundred times its value. You're no idiot, Laura," he went on, coaxingly. "I should never have dreamed of you for a wife if you were only a pretty simpleton, and I believe you can understand me when I tell you that though you might go and sell that ring for a pretty handsome sum yet it would be a great risk to offer it to anyone, since there would certainly be questions asked and very likely the jewel detained. Now, if you will be guided by me—yes, and if you are willing to be my wife, and to share all the savings and the profits that I can secure for you and myself—I can tell you we may get enough out of that ring to keep us handsomely for life."

Mind you," he added, impressively, "I do not want it at once. It may be a little time yet before my plans are settled, or the clue worked out which that jewel gives, but if you're willing, I am, and we can either get married at once or wait till it's all settled."

Laura's cheeks had varied during the speech from a kind of saucy crimson flush to a half-alarmed white tint.

In truth, she was divided between the alluring prospect of wealth and ease held out to her and the secret conviction that Mr. Jenkins was a great deal too old for a pretty girl like herself, and also that he might know too much, and prove too clever and too impetuous as a husband, since even as a lover he took too decidedly superior and too knowing a tone for her vanity to approve.

"I'm quite willing to be guided by you, since you're so much older than I am," she returned, flippantly, "but as to giving my word right off—promising to marry you, Mr. Jenkins—it's more than I'm prepared for or you ought to expect of a girl. Still, I don't say but what it is very likely I might prefer a good home and a steady, respectable husband even to a younger and a jollier sweetheart, like George Skrene for instance."

"So I should think," returned the steward, sharply, "unless you've a taste for poverty and half a dozen rivals into the bargain. I know Skrene pretty well, and there's not a good-looking girl in the county he wouldn't be after if he could. But as to the rest I don't mean to tie you down to give an answer right off, Laura; but I wish you to do one thing that may be wanted, and cannot be put off."

"And what's that?" she asked, eagerly.

"I want you to take me to the exact place where you found the ring," he said, firmly, "and before any one else can have been there to alter any of the traces. Will you do this, and we can see about the rest afterwards, when you've had time to consider it over, my pretty Laura?"

"I can't tell my lady might ring, and it would look odd if I were not in the way," she said, with a hesitating glance.

"It cannot take long, and Miss Vyvian is not at all likely to wait you for another hour," he urged. "It's only five, and she certainly won't get up till ten or so. See," he continued, "what I bought for you the other day when I was at Taunton, drawing from his pocket an exquisite little delicate gold chain and cross that might certainly have graced the throat of the most refined and fairest debutante in the country round."

Laura's eyes sparkled.

It was well nigh impossible to resist such a tempting bribe.

Jenkins dangled it in his fingers with most tempting dexterity, so as to exhibit its elegant and becoming formation.

"Well, it's very pretty, that's certain, Mr. Jenkins," she said, "and since you have been kind enough to think of me very likely I'll try my best to please you, though I really can't see what you're driving after. There, give me the little thing," she said, putting up her lips coquettishly.

"And I must have a kiss as well," he returned.

The toll was paid with seeming reluctance, and then Jenkins resumed:

"You'll take me to the spot? It cannot be far, Laura, and you needn't stay, unless you like," he went on, still retaining the bauble in his grasp.

"Yes, yes, only give it me," she said, as the vision of her own pretty person ducked out in the graceful trifle danced before her eyes.

"Is it a bargain?" he went on, still refusing to give up the bauble.

"Yes, yes, I have said it, only make haste," was the rejoinder.

The next instant Laura held the tempting bribe in her own keeping, and prepared to fulfil the stipulation enforced.

She glided stealthily and swiftly from the room. Jenkins obeying the lead in equal silence, and in a few brief moments the pair were standing at the destination proposed.

It was just at the entrance of the "lady's garden," where a whole wilderness of graceful and glowing shrubs were congregated that Laura indicated as the lucky receptacle of the ring.

Jenkins stooped, then knelt, and peered over the whole surface of the neighbourhood of the spot.

For some minutes nothing rewarded the diligence of his investigations, then a slight and almost imperceptible change in the colour of the ground met his sharp eyes. It was very faint, such as would hardly have been noticed unless under such exceptional circumstances.

But it was enough for Jenkins.

He looked up at Laura with a well-pleased smile.

"I say, my pretty queen of trumps," he began, in a whisper, "you've drawn a card that will win you a high game. Now just leave me to trace it all out, while you return to your pretty mistress, and don't take an notice that you have seen or heard anything but the cows and the sheep and the birds while you were out for her morning draught. But," he added in her ear, "I tell you, if you are wise, and follow my guidance, there won't be a lady in the county under a peer's daughter that shall beat you in dress or jewels; only one false step might ruin all, and it will bring a very hornet's nest about you should you play me false."

Laura tried to assume her usual diffident manner and toss her pretty head in defiance of the implied threat, but the mastery was too strong, the mingled bribes and threats too overpowering for her fortitude, and she hastily gave a whispered response to her imperious suitor and glided hastily from the spot.

Miss Vyvian's bell was ringing even at the very moment that she entered the house, and, throwing off her hat and cloak, she rapidly obeyed the summons.

Celia was sitting up in bed with her pale cheeks varied by two deep scarlet spots as she entered.

"What is the meaning of this delay?" she said, impetuously. "I rang twice, Laura, before you answered the bell."

"I have only just come in from procuring the draught I told you of last night, Miss Vyvian," returned the maid, humbly.

"Have you got it?" asked the heiress.

Laura produced the glass.

"Taste it," said Celia, "I do not like to risk its being disagreeable. Let me see you drink some, Laura."

The maid obeyed readily enough, and her mistress seemed to dispel all lurking suspicions.

"Give it me," she said; "I feel worn out and thirsty. I will drink it if it is reviving."

Laura placed the glass in her hands and in a few minutes it was emptied.

"Now I will dress," said Celia, hurriedly; "there may be visitors this morning. Has any one been yet, Laura?" she asked, with a quick, sharp look.

"No one, Miss Vyvian; I have not heard a sound even of voices," was the reply, and a deep sigh of relief escaped Celia's lips.

(To be continued.)

BOMBED CITIES.—South Africa, not satisfied with its diamonds, is now digging up buried cities, in regard to one of which the idea is industriously circulated that it is identical with ancient Ophir, where the Queen of Sheba dwelt, and where there was much store of gold and precious stones.

MANCHESTER is not, after all, such a magnificent patron of the arts as is supposed. The sales at her Academy's annual exhibition this year have only been 2,300, as against 4,000, in Birmingham and

6,000*l.* in Liverpool in the case of similar exhibitions.

THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH.

CHAPTER XI.

THE locksmith's apprentice was free at length. In his sanguine hopefulness he saw a brilliant future before him.

He was industrious, enterprising, ambitious, in the enjoyment of perfect health, and in possession of rare mental qualities.

He felt that he was independent now; for he had acquired a good trade, and he had brought to what he believed perfection the splendid piece of mechanism that would surely prove his fortune. It was the work of his own hands and brain, and he deemed himself a self-made man.

The pungent author of modern aphorisms, Josh Billings, declares that he "is not partial to the self-made man, since the maker is apt to think too well of his job."

There is a deal of truth in this, and it will very frequently apply.

In Ned Corson's case, however, the artificer was altogether of a different calibre.

Innately modest, reserved and diffident, submissive in his department, and rarely demonstrative in any way, Ned Corson had grown up under the example and tutelage of his sulky, exacting master, Boissey, quite free from all sentiment of vanity, pride, or self-sufficiency.

Nevertheless he knew that he was largely indebted to his own steady exertions for what he now possessed.

He loved his profession and was proud of it. He had laboured long to excel in his humble art. He had devoted himself studiously for over six years to the one purpose of becoming a proficient in his calling; and he had accomplished the prime object of his early ambition—to wit, to be a good mechanic and an expert in his trade.

So when he settled down to business on his own account he went steadily onward, confident in himself, though unostentatious in his bearing.

He was not troubled by the criticisms of less skillful or officious rivals, who shortly began to buzz and croak around the rising young locksmith, whose character and inventions alike they would gladly have picked to pieces but for the entire indifference the young man exhibited to their studied opposition.

He bore within him the consciousness that he was their superior in skill, and bravely said:

"Let carpers sneer, let them deride!

He heeded not the scorner.

Free hands and heart were yet his pride,

And duty done his honour.

He dared to trust, for honest fame,

The jury Time impales;

And left to Truth the noble name

Which glorifies our annals."

The poor boy who had come to Boissey from the parish workhouse, and who knew nothing of his origin otherwise, very well knew that through his own exertions and by the labour of his own hands thenceforth alone could he obtain his living. He had no friends, but he made them as he toiled.

He had no means at hand, though his father had actually left him altogether beyond the reach of want at his decease.

But of this fact he was totally ignorant. His hard-headed employer cared only to instruct him so far as to get the best service and the greatest amount of work out of the young pauper.

And thus Ned made up his mind, while he was an apprentice, that if he were to be "made a man of," he must take a hand in the job himself. And a very good sample of work he turned out in the end.

We left our hero, at the close of the last chapter, on Christmas night, in the comfortable back parlour of Captain Blount's mansion, enjoying a pleasant *tête-à-tête* with Katrin Delorme.

This meeting was indeed a joyful surprise for the young man, which the captain had hinted was in reserve for him upon Ned's acceptance of the old mariner's invitation to pass his freedom vacation at his residence.

And he availed himself of his opportunity in this interview with the former associate of his youth to "free his mind."

"And so you are free at last, Ned," said Katrin. "And you tell me your prospects in life are flattering. I am rejoiced, for you've journeyed a long road in your apprenticeship, and I judge that you too are glad to have reached the turn in it on this auspicious return of Christmas Day."

"You are right, Katrin. I am happy to feel that I have passed through the roughest of the way. And as to the future I have no fears but that I shall prosper. I have got a good trade, and I think I understand the details of my calling, which is quite re-

munerative; for there is always plenty of work to be done for willing and competent artisans in my line. But pecuniarily, Katrin, I am, at twenty-one years of age, as poor as a church mouse."

"I did not suppose you would ever leave Mr. Boissey's employ greatly burdened with wealth, Ned," said Katrin, with a smile.

"No. He opened his heart and his purse though at parting and presented his retiring apprentice with twenty pounds. This sum and two decent suits of clothes constitute the fortune of your humble servant upon this 'merrie' Christmas Day, Katrin."

"Well, it might have been less, Ned."

"Yes—but not much. However, I have served him to the best of my ability; and though he has often treated me harshly and inconsiderately, in the long years I have been with him, and never exhibited a feeling of kindness or sympathy for the pauper boy he has 'housed and fed and clothed,' in accordance with the letter of his indentures I bear him no ill-will. There are many better men in the community but there is many a worse one than Luke Boissey, locksmith."

"But now, Ned, you are your own master."

"Yes, Katrin. And though I am poor in purse I have invented and completed a device in my line of trade which by-and-by will yield me good returns."

"What is it?" she asked, with interest.

"I am going to tell you about it, Katrin—though but one other person besides myself has any knowledge of it. That is Captain Blount. He has been kind to me in his way, and I have explained my long-kept secret to him alone."

Katrin was all attention upon this announcement of her friend that something mysterious was forthcoming. For, like the majority of her sex, she liked to "help keep a secret."

"What is it, Ned? And how have you managed to keep this all to yourself so long?" she asked, leaning toward him with open ears.

The boy placed his arm gently about her waist and said, in a low, earnest tone:

"I have two secrets, Katrin, which I will disclose to you to-night, that I have kept within my own breast for more than three years back."

"Two, Ned? Are they both inventions?"

"No, dear Katrin. One is."

"And the other?" she naively asked.

"Is but a simple fact which is known, I think, to me alone."

"Whom does this concern, Ned?"

"You, Katrin."

"Me? My history?"

"Simply yourself, Katrin."

More eager now than at first—for the innocent girl supposed that Ned had obtained some new clue to her origin or family—she permitted the handsome young locksmith to draw her close beside him upon the broad divan on which they were seated together, and listened with bated breath to the secret he had to communicate.

Ned then explained in detail how he had conceived the plan for the construction of his new lock, and informed Katrin how he chanced to make the discovery of a portion of the principle of its motion, by removing and studying the interior contrivance of the old oak-wood chest-lock.

He also informed her that he had completed a perfect safe or vault lock, which was now ready to be placed in position; that the invention was entirely new and different from any in the market, and assumed that when placed upon the strong box of a bank or merchant it would defy any burglar.

Indeed he intended to christen this invention "Corson's Improved Burglar-Proof Bank Safe Lock."

"It is mine, Katrin—mine from the start and mine completed. On the construction and sale of this lock, my dear Katrin, I base my hopes and expectations of a future fortune, and I know I have got the best article of its kind ever produced in England. I have wrought it out in my own time by night, after my day's work was finished, and therefore my late employer can set up no claim to it. To effect this, however, I was obliged to keep it out of sight and work upon it by myself lest Boissey should discover and claim it as his property, designed and finished by his apprentice."

"And you succeeded to the end?"

"Yes, Katrin, and this secret I have kept until I should be free, when I am legally at liberty to do what I please with it without Boissey's interference. This is my first secret, which I now place in your custody not to be divulged to any one."

"You may trust my discretion, Ned."

"Of course I can, or I should not have reposed in you this confidence, Katrin."

"And now the other secret, Ned. Tell me that too and I promise in advance to keep them sacredly. You say it relates to me. What is it?"

The young man took her hand in his own, and, pressing her still closer to his side, astonished the pretty girl with the details of his second secret, which he confided to her listening ear in a soft whisper, as follows:

"The first secret I confided to your keeping, dear Katrin," continued Ned, "related to my business prospects, more particularly. What I now have to say relates to you as well as to me."

Katrin Delorme was now eighteen years old; but she was the same simple-hearted girl she had always been, and she had no idea until this moment that Ned's announcement would be anything more than some vague account regarding her family history.

Now on a sudden her little heart began to flutter as she looked into her friend's earnest face while he disclosed to her his second secret.

"Three years ago to-day," he continued, "a poor, almost friendless boy, who had been for some years a welcomed guest beneath the roof of an aged light-keeper, passed a delightful Christmas evening at his lowly dwelling, in company with a sweet young girl—this old man's adopted daughter."

"On this particular night the lad found himself there for the last time. He came to say good-bye to the little beauty, who had grown up with him there, for his employer had concluded to leave the village and go to London to reside."

"Ah, how the old days come back," murmured Katrin, as she nestled closer to Ned's side.

"The boy bade the girl farewell. She was a waif, a foundling—like himself. And as they were about to separate she said: 'When you reach the great city you will rise rapidly in your worldly estate, will become absorbed in your vocation, and will hardly think of us poor folk whom you now leave behind you.' But he told her he could never forget her, and he never did. She was constantly in his thoughts, and very often he saw her sweet face in his dreams, Katrin."

"He rallied her as he left the house, and hinted that she might yet turn out to be the member of some fine family; and asked her if such should be the case would she be likely to remember the penniless youth who had so long been her companion and friend? And in reply she said, earnestly:

"How could I cease to cherish the memory of one I so highly esteem? No, never."

"And she was faithful to her word, Ned!" exclaimed fair Katrin. "She never did forget him!"

"I know it, dear Katrin. But they parted. The boy grew to be a man. The maiden ripened into a glorious woman. And three years afterward they met again under better auspices, and flew into each other's arms like true lovers, as they were, and had been, all that time; although from first to last they had not uttered one word of love!"

"Because they did not know they loved," said Katrin, sighing.

"Ay—so it was. They neither of them—at that time, I think—conceived that fate had thrown them thus in close proximity for such a purpose. Still they loved each other then as now. Is it not so?"

"Ah, dear Neddy," responded Katrin, as the youth then drew her to his heart, "this is a secret worth revealing, and still better worth the keeping. Thanks for your frankness and confidence. And be sure I will keep both treasured in my heart—where your loved image has so long been enshrined. I am very happy now, Ned. And truly I ought to be a happy girl after listening to your pretty story. Believe me, all of love that you bestow upon the poor little orphan, Katrin Delorme, will be paid back in full and with interest."

"Now, dear Katrin," said the young man, "I know how to make a safe-lock, but I don't know how to make love, *à la mode*."

"You certainly have made a most excellent commencement, Ned—so far as I can judge—though, as you know, this is my first experience in this direction," said Katrin, smiling.

"Well, Katrin, I will only conclude the details of this second secret by saying frankly and honestly that I love you to-day as fondly as I did two, three, five years ago."

"But never better than I have and do love you, Neddy," insisted Katrin.

"I believe it, Katrin. Now I offer you my heart and hand. Fortune I have none. I've a good trade, a good invention of my own, and the will to make you a faithful, loving husband, at the proper time. Will you be my wife, Katrin?"

"Yes, dear Ned, with all my heart," replied the artless girl.

And thus, with a kiss, the rather summarily plighted troth of the two young waifs—one the adopted daughter of jovial Captain Blount, and the other but lately the locksmith's apprentice—was sealed.

"Hullo, my boy! What time did you get up?" shouted jolly Captain Blount, next morning, looking

out of his chamber window and seeing Ned abroad in the garden.

"Ah, good-morning, captain," responded Ned, cheerily. "I've been down since sunrise."

"You're an early riser, Ned."

"Yes, that is my habit at home, you know. 'Up with the lark—or sooner,'—old Bolessey says, for it's the early bird that catches the worm. How are you to-day, captain?" he continued, as the old sea-dog made his appearance out of doors.

"Fine as a lily bird, Ned. What time did you and Katty retire last night, eh?"

"Early, captain—quite early."

"Yes, early this morning. Oh, you needn't try to dodge me, you know, my boy. I heard you. It was past one o'clock. I sleep with one eye open nowadays, Ned—since the fire, you understand. Now, how is it? All right—eh, boy?"

"What, captain?"

"You've settled it, of course—eh?"

"Settled what?"

"What! Your matter with Katty, you rogue! She's a beauty, by Jove, she is! You've made it all right with her, of course, and it's arranged, I s'pose, to your likin', and here, eh?"

"Ah, you've got one of my secrets, captain. This affair is another. But this is all strictly between Katty and myself."

"Well, it's all right, anyhow, eh?" persisted the captain.

"It will be all right, I hope, in time, captain."

"She's agreeable, eh?"

"Very agreeable, always."

"That's enough. Secure her, my boy! Don't let her slip by you. She likes you, and you like her. You were born for each other. Make sure of her. She aren't one of the kind to be in the market long."

"She says she will return to the academy after vacation," said Ned, "and complete her studies next year. Then I shall be in condition to talk business' much better than I am now, captain. But 'everything is lovely' so far."

"Good! I thought you'd agree," concluded the captain, as the breakfast summons sounded.

"Come in, boy. Breakfast is ready. There goes 'eight bells.' And by-and-by we'll take a stroll again, and talk of other matters, which you spoke of briefly yesterday. Time enough. No hurry. You're free. Haven't got to run back to the shop to-morrow, or next day, or next week. Take your time. Come!"

And the two disappeared within the house to join the young ladies.

Katrina came down to the morning meal, bright, rosy, and cheerful as usual. The captain had his joke with her, and all were in very good spirits.

After breakfast the young ladies went out for an airing in the family carriage, driven by the groom Blount had kept of late, and the captain took Ned out into the fields quietly to talk over his business affairs, at the latter's request.

And the following was the result of their deliberations, which occupied them up to noon that day.

CHAPTER XII.

"Don't you holler, Ned, my boy, till you're clean out of the woods," said Captain Blount, when they were fairly out of sound of the house.

"No, captain, I don't make any display with this invention of mine, of course; and I have kept it pretty quiet so far. Nobody save you and Katrina knows aught of it."

"So you told Katty about it, eh?"

"Yes, I did, captain."

"That is right. But let your secret go no farther. She'll be close-mouthed, I reck'n. Though she's a woman, after all."

"But a true one, captain."

"I think so."

"Try her and see! She's fond of you, captain, but try her and see if you can learn anything she knows of it."

"Well, all right. But, Ned, I've had something to do in my time with inventions, and I tell you that you are not clear of the bush yet, by a heap. So have your eyes open, now, or some keen-eyed fellow who can get a sight at your invention will steal your principle and ideas, and afore you know who hit you some sharp fellow will have your safe lock and take out a patent for it in his own right, and rob you of all. Look out!"

"How's anybody to see my invention without my knowledge or permission, captain?"

"Have you taken steps to secure your patent yet, Ned?"

"Patent!" exclaimed Ned. "No, I've never thought about that yet."

"Well, upon my word, you're not so smart as I thought you were, my boy."

"But nobody's seen my model yet."

"All right, then, so far. See they don't, Ned."

And file a caveat at once, then make the necessary preliminary declarations."

Ned was not a little nettled at the captain's remarks.

"What's the good o' your invention without a patent, I'd like to know?" queried the shrewd captain.

"It's my work," said Ned, innocently.

"And anybody can rob you of all your nights of hard toil, if you don't patent it, I tell you, if they have the chance."

"But they wouldn't, surely!"

"No? Let me tell you a brief story of a capital little invention got up originally by a poor young mechanic not long since, all the particulars of which, as I now relate them, I happen to know, Ned."

"Only a few years since," continued the captain, "the sewing machine was invented."

"Yes, I know."

"A young man bought half a dozen of these instruments, and took shop-room to run them upon ladies' shoe-work. In putting the binding upon the prunella boot he found it necessary to affix an adjustment to guide it upon the edge of the material when the machine was in rapid motion—which he did, for his own use, and it succeeded admirably."

"It was simply a peculiarly curved, narrow strip of sheet brass, and cost to manufacture, by the hundred, afterwards, sixpence or less each. It was seen by his neighbours, and admired, and he made a dozen for different parties, who paid him a guinea each for them, they were so useful and almost indispensable, as the result proved."

"He had repeated orders for these little brass 'binders,' as the young inventor called them, and executed them as they came, making a round profit on their sale, as you see."

"One day, there came into his shop a mousing fellow, with an eye to business, who had heard of and seen this insignificant instrument attached to several sewing machines, and made some indifferent inquiries of the originator, who civilly explained the matter, and told him he was going to patent it, supposing he was a customer for a guinea binder."

"This man went away, and he saw nothing more of him, but remembered him clearly."

"Four months afterwards the young man happened to be in a sewing machine saleroom, and he was not a little surprised to see upon every one of the machines there his little brass binder attached! And, upon closer examination, he found stamped upon each one the words, 'Patented by John Smith,' and dated only a few weeks previously!"

"Where did you get these binders?" he asked of the proprietors of the saleroom.

"We make them," they answered.

"It is my invention, gentlemen."

"We pay Mr. Smith a royalty on his patent for them, sir—five shillings each—and manufacture them ourselves," said the men.

"The deuce you do! I tell you I originated that binder with my own hands."

"Did you patent it?"

"No; but I intended to."

"This man has patented it. It's a grand thing, too. We put them upon all our machines now, and can't do without them. Every sewing-machine house in the country must have them. The patent of that little binder is worth five thousand pounds to-day, sir. If it's yours, you'd better look after it. It's Smith's so far, and I think he's got a little ahead of your time, my friend," concluded the head of the firm.

"The real inventor went to a lawyer, told him his story frankly, and asked his advice."

"How much money have you got?" he was asked.

"Not a great deal—why?" said the inventor.

"It will cost you a great deal to establish your claim, sir. What are your proofs of priority as inventor of this binder?"

"I made, used, and sold them months ago, as my books will show."

"How many months since?"

"Five or six. I can prove it by half-a-dozen witnesses at the least."

"Is that all you can do?"

"Yes, except by my own testimony."

"You are a mechanic, I judge?"

"Yes, sir."

"What wages can you earn?"

"Eight shillings, or more, a day, sir."

"Well, you had much better go to work at eight shillings a day, then, and thus get a quiet living, than to follow this matter one step farther. It is a very good thing, sir, and Smith will make ten thousand pounds out of it. If you go after him, he'll produce forty witnesses to swear they bought their binders of him eight, ten, twelve months ago, easy, sir. You should have got your patent out before exposing your hand. You're forestalled, sir. Smith holds a winning card and he won't be likely to give it up, I think."

"The poor mechanic was thus bowed out, and never realized another shilling from this capital invention. There's a short Christmas yarn, and a good lesson for you, Ned, my boy—and it's fact."

"That was a very dishonourable act, captain," said Ned, thoughtfully.

"Pooh! The fellow thought it a good chance, and he took it."

"With a vengeance," added Ned; and then he asked: "Why didn't he contest the question?"

"He had no money—the other chap had."

"That's just what's the matter with me," ventured Ned, in a low tone, which the captain did not catch. "Get out your patent at once, Ned—that's my advice, you're of age now—and thus secure what you have so cleverly contrived in season."

The young locksmith's eyes had been opened by means of the captain's story and his words of caution, and this proved his first lesson in the matter of obtaining a patent with which to protect what he had laboured so long to work out.

He returned with the captain to the house, and next day informed his friends he should go up to London at once.

He had resolved upon getting letters-patent out, forthwith, upon "Corson's Improved Burglar-proof Safe Lock." He passed a week in ascertaining what it was necessary for him to do about procuring a patent, and also something approximating to the probable cash outlay requisite to get his papers, provided that, upon examination, his invention did not infringe upon others already patented, etc.

After paying for learning all this, and finding that he had but a few pounds left in hand, he returned once more to the village, to confer with Captain Blount again, and to take leave of Katrina, who was now preparing to go back to the academy.

Ned met with a cordial greeting once more, and the next morning he went into Captain Blount's private sitting-room, where they sat together three hours and discussed the affair of the letters-patent again in detail.

"Only one hundred pounds?" exclaimed the captain, pleasantly, when Ned told him that he had found, to his surprise, that it would cost this sum to make his arrangements and procure his patent papers for the safe-lock.

"Yes," said Ned. "But one hundred pounds is more money than I ever saw at once in all my life. I haven't got ten pounds in the world, captain."

"What o' that? You're twenty-one—in prime good health, got a good trade, the love of the prettiest girl in the county, and a fast friend in Capt'n Jos Blount, that'll stick to you as long as you live—eh?"

"Thank you, cap'n. You're very kind, and what you say is true enough, I see. But I don't really know where to turn to raise a hundred pounds in ready cash. It's a heap o' money, sir. I thought of old Bolessey when I was in London. But he wouldn't give or lend me so much money to save my life."

"Did you try him?" asked Blount, sharply.

"No, I didn't, cap'n."

"And if you had, without comin' to me first, I'd have knocked you—off my books, my boy, quicker'n lightning," responded the captain, in a huff.

"Oh, I don't propose to trouble you about the matter," said Ned, feelingly. "You've done enough for me and for Katty. I only ask your advice in this, and I'll paddle my own canoe out o' the fog before long somehow."

"Don't you put on airs with me, Ned Corson," replied the bluff captain. "And don't you talk about what I've done for you here. 'Twon't go down. What did you do for me, you croaker? Didn't you save my life at the fire—eh?"

"I did just what any man ought to do, under the circumstances—my duty to a fellow-man in peril—that's all."

"And you did just what a hundred gapers and howlers in the street around the fire didn't do, 'cause they hadn't the pluck to venture into the flames and smoke, Ned Corson."

"I never plumed myself upon that little affair, cap'n. It wasn't much, any way."

"I know you didn't. That's why I like you the better, my boy. But you did it, and I don't forget it. Old Jos Blount don't go back on his friends—not much. Now I'm glad you're in just the fix you've got into, and I'm goin' to help you out," concluded the generous-hearted old seaman.

And, turning about, he took out of his old brown desk a thin book, and said:

"Don't bother me now, Ned—I'm writin'."

A moment afterwards he tore a narrow slip out of this book, at the bottom of which he had written in a bold hand "Jos. Blount." And, laying the book aside, he handed the little document to the young man, who stared at the paper—astounded!

It was a clean, bright cheque payable to "Edward Corson, inventor, or order," for two hundred pounds.

"There, my boy. Don't talk now. Take that, and get your letters patent out at once. And never believe that old Joe Blount forgets a favour done him."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed Ned, overwhelmed with this liberality—"I really—"

"Don't talk, I say. Don't argue. Short and sweet now. Go and secure your patent for the safe lock; and then we'll see about what's to be done next."

"But how—when can I ever pay you?" asked Ned, confused, though gratified at this munificence.

"When I ask you to do so, my boy."

"I really don't feel that I ought thus to ask your generosity, Cap'n Blount. This cheque is for two hundred pounds, sir! Twice as much as I need."

"What's that? Look you, Ned Corson. There's plenty more behind. I made five times that sum the last voyage I ever made from Smyrna and Palermo. I've got enough, and to spare. Attend to your business, and I'll take care of mine. Joe Blount, mariner, knows what he's about."

"Well, cap'n," continued Ned, still holding the cheque in his hand, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get the patent out jointly in your name and mine, and you shall own half of it; and out of our first receipts for sales of our locks this money shall be refunded, and you shall take half proceeds of all profits thereafter."

"No, you won't do anything of the kind, my boy. You won't spoil our jolly Christmas meeting that way. I'm a sailor, not an inventor. There'll be no two bits to this cherry. I don't want it. I don't need it. I've got all the money I want in this world, my boy, and I'm going to have my own way in this matter. When I'm aboard ship I'm cap'n. I'm on my own quarter-deck here, and you're only second in command. Now, Mr. Corson, no words! I'm master of this craft. Crack on all sail, sir," continued the old salt, as if he were giving a peremptory order to his first officer on shipboard. "Fling out everything, sir! Brace the yards to the wind! haul taut, all, and keep her before it!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded Ned, in a similar vein, as he deposited the cheque in his pocket-book.

"It's a lively breeze, I know, Mr. Corson. But the old craft'll bear it. Let her go! And if you need me call on me again. There's a shot left in the locker yet, and you're welcome to ammunition as long as it lasts."

"Thank you, sir. I'll do my best to merit your kindness," concluded Ned, gratefully, as this interview terminated.

He had passed the happiest Christmas week in his life; and three days after this meeting the young man parted with Captain Blount's family and returned to London.

Katrin went back to the academy to finish her education. The lovers arranged for a correspondence during the next year, and before Ned left he informed the captain and his daughters that he and Katy were formally engaged, which pleased the old fellow vastly.

Matters at the village fell into the old grooves again.

Captain Blount continued to improve in his bodily health. Ned went to the bank, changed his cheque, and had two hundred pounds in cash, with which to commence operations toward obtaining his letters patent and putting his new invention upon the market.

But he had several competitors already established in the field. There were many good, substantial, serviceable contrivances in vogue, in the shape of safe and bank locks, at that day.

The young locksmith was entering a busy arena, where he met with sharp business men, talented mechanics, and manufacturers possessing capital, tact, genius, and enterprise who had previously embarked their means in other good patent inventions of this kind, which they were bound to push and protect from infringement at any cost.

But Ned looked over the whole ground, and felt satisfied that he had the very best safe-lock out. He had no fears of competition when once his invention was before the public fairly, and he went at his work in good spirits and with the determination to win.

(To be continued.)

PROPOSED TECHNICAL COLLEGE AT GLASGOW.—Upwards of 12,000, have been subscribed towards a fund for the establishment in Glasgow of a Technical College, in which the different branches of practical engineering, spinning, weaving, etc., are to be taught on scientific principles.

WORTH KNOWING.—At Nice there is a Russian who made many millions of roubles by railway speculations. He refuses now to go into society, and receives at his house none but the persons whom he knew in the happy old days when he had not a sou. To them he makes little presents of a thousand or two thousand roubles, and so on. This

eccentric gentleman, whose name is not given, is clearly a person worth knowing.

LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

CHAPTER XV.

THE fear that he had killed Bernice by his abrupt revelations for a moment paralyzed Gilbert Monk. He stood in the centre of the gloomy subterranean vault, with the black shadows lurking all around him among the stone arches, his swarthy face of an ashen pallor, while Bernice, in her long white robes, lay at his feet motionless, insensible, with the light of the lantern pouring in a wide and ruddy flood upon her upturned face, with its ghastly, sharpened features and staring eyes.

He stooped and gathered the girl in his arms and carried her again to the stone bench, laying her upon the unfolded cloak, and clasping her hands with violent energy.

"It's only a swoon, I'm sure," he thought. "But still she must be very weak. Old Ragee said the poison in 'vial number three' left the person who might take it as helpless as an infant. She has only fainted. Bernice, Bernice! Great Heaven! What if some one should have heard that frightful shriek of hers, and be lurking about the church!"

The thought brought to him a quickening sense of his personal danger, in the event of discovery in his present position. He laid the girl back upon the bench, and crept up the damp stone stairs to the church. All was silent there. There was no sound as of one seeking to effect an entrance.

Looking round, he paused in sudden recoil. Bernice was sitting upright upon the stone bench, one hand upon her forehead in the attitude of one trying to remember, her dusky eyes exploring the recesses of the vault with glances of horror and loathing. There was something so spectral about her in her white robes, and with her strange white face, that Gilbert Monk, whose nerves were greatly shaken, for a moment fancied her an apparition, instead of a living human being.

"Do you feel better now, Bernice?" he asked, modulating his tones to tenderest sympathy, and hiding the sudden exultant joy that swelled his soul.

"Better?" and Bernice's sweet young voice thrilled him with its strangeness, and the girl's haunting eyes fixed their wild, troubled glances upon him. "Oh, Gilbert, is this place the Chetwynd burial vault? Is all you have just told me true? Are these my graveclothes?" and she looked in loathing at her dress. "Have I been buried here—left to moulder in one of those hideous coffins?"

"Yes, Bernice."

"Oh, Heaven! They buried me while I was alive! And if you had not come to me, Gilbert, I should have awakened in one of those loathsome coffins—should have struggled and prayed and fought for my precious life, and struggled and prayed and fought in vain! Perhaps I should have bitten the flesh off my arms, as I have read that people have done who were buried in trances," and she pushed back her sleeves, and looked upon her wasted arms with dilating, horrified eyes. "Perhaps I should have torn out my hair in my awful agony. I would have called, and my cries would have filled my coffin, deafening me, but no one would have heard me. And so I should have lain there and slowly died! Oh, Gilbert," and she shuddered, "how can I ever repay you for the happy chance that brought you to me? I cannot understand why you came here."

"It was a strange providence, Bernice. I had seen a man once who lay in a trance. He came to life at his own funeral. You looked as he looked when I saw him in his coffin, and I had a sudden fancy—I call it instinct—that although you had seemed to be dead during six days the spark of life might yet be smouldering in your bosom. I spoke to Doctor Hartright regarding my suspicions, but he rebuked me sternly, and said that you were actually dead, and that my suspicions were the wildest folly."

"May Heaven bless you, Gilbert Monk. I shall love you as long as I live for this night's work," cried Bernice, with passionate fervour. "I will be your sister. You shall have a home at Chetwynd Park so long as you live. Roy shall settle a handsome annuity upon you. I shall never, never forget that you have saved my life, have rescued me from the tomb, have stolen me out of my coffin, away from decay and the vile worms. Oh, Gilbert, what a fate is this from which you have rescued me!"

"Terrible—horrible indeed!"

"Take me to my poor, heart-broken darling."

She clung to Monk in agonized pleading.

"Yes, Bernice," answered Gilbert Monk, gently.

"Can you walk, do you think?"

The girl tottered a few steps, and then reeled and would have fallen, but he caught her.

"You are too weak to walk, Bernice," said the schemer. "Let me give you a little more brandy. That will give you strength enough to reach the street at least, and I can carry you home."

He had hastily thrust his small bottle of drugged brandy in his pocket after Bernice had refused it, and he now produced it again, uncorked it, and placed it to her lips.

She drank eagerly, more than he had expected.

"Now come," she said. "I feel stronger, Gilbert. Think of Roy in our great lonely rooms. What will he say when I come back to him from the grave? You must go in and break the news to him gently while I stand outside, Gilbert."

Monk stopped upon the upper step and drew the black slide over his lantern. Then he put his arm around Bernice and drew her out into the dim and shadowy church.

The girl clung to him, shivering.

"Why do you put out the light?" she whispered.

"It is best that no one should see us and carry the news to the Park of your rescue from the grave," said Monk, plausibly. "The tidings must be broken to Chetwynd very gently."

"Yes, yes. How strangely the light comes in at the painted windows. I am afraid here, Gilbert. I seem to feel that I am not yet clear of the grave. There's a strange weight on my brain, and I'm so tired."

She leaned on him more heavily, while he looked the door of the stairs, and he then half led, half carried her along the dim and dusky aisle to the outer door of the church. He had looked it on entering, and now unlocked it, his motions soft and still. He opened the door a few inches, and hastily closed it.

"It's all right," he whispered. "There's no one in the street. Let me put this cloak on you, Bernice. So."

He wrapped the long black cloak about her and pulled the close hood over her head, half hiding her white face.

He had left everything as he had found it, with not a trace of his presence in the church upon that night. He felt exultant, triumphant, joyful.

"Come, Bernice," he said, softly. "We must hurry."

The girl did not answer. Her head had fallen forward on her breast, and she was breathing heavily. The narcotic in the brandy she had drunk had taken effect. She was asleep.

"It's all right now," muttered Monk. "When she awakens she'll be far enough from here."

He stooped over her, gathered her up in his arms, and crept down the porch steps, moving among the tombstones toward the gate.

Monk balanced his basket on his arm, and, holding the girl closely to him, began his return to the waiting carriage, half a mile distant.

Monk came up to the vehicle. The driver leaped down from his box, pipe in mouth, and opened the coach door. Monk set down his basket, turned back the slide of his lantern, flashing the light into the vehicle, and laid his helpless burden in upon the cushions.

"Is she asleep, sir?" asked Flack, in amazement.

"Or is she in a swoon?"

"She fainted away down below the hill," said Monk, calmly. "The walk was almost too much for her."

Flack winked significantly with his left eye.

Monk wrapped up the insensible girl carefully, close the carriage door, and climbed up to the box. Flack was up beside him on the instant, and he turned the vehicle, cracked his whip, and they went rapidly along the road in the direction whence they had come at an earlier hour of the same night.

"Did you see any one while you were waiting?" asked Monk as they drove onward.

"Not a soul, gov'nor. I was on the watch every blessed instant, with my head a-bobbing in every direction, but I neither saw nor heard anything. I began to think, though, that you were going to take me at my word, sir, and keep me waiting till Lady Day."

"Turn here, Flack," said Monk, abruptly. "Our course now lies along lonely and unfrequented roads. We are sure to meet no one. There are no houses near the road for miles. You can drive as fast as the horses will go."

Flack obeyed the injunction literally. He urged the horses to their best speed, hurrying over the rough road at a break-neck pace that threatened to break the carriage.

They drove on for miles, slackening their speed occasionally to rest the horses, or at a bad stretch of road, and neither of the two men spoke for hours. Monk was busy with his schemes and his ally was content to be under orders.

At last the gray of early dawn began to creep up the sky. The horses began to flag. Monk broke the long silence.

"We must have come twenty miles," he observed.

"We must be near our destination."

"It's a mile or two farther on," said Flack, peering about him upon both sides of the lonely road. They were now in the midst of a bare and lonely common. The fences were broken down upon either side of the road, and Flack turned off from the highway and drove over the common—an extensive sheep-run or pasture.

They drove on a mile or more, and came at last to a lonely shepherd's hut, unused at this season by the shepherds. All around the hut lay the breezy common. Not a chimney was in sight on any side.

Monk alighted and opened the carriage door. Bernice was in the midst of her artificial slumbers. Monk lifted her out, spoke a few words of direction to his ally, and started for the hut. It had but one door and one window. Monk knocked upon the door thrice significantly, his knock being a signal. There was a rattling of bolts inside and then the door opened and a woman's head was protruded.

"It is I," said Monk. "Let me in." The door opened and Monk bore his burden into the hut. The door closed to and was secured again upon the instant.

CHAPTER XVI.

The interior of the hut into which Gilbert Monk had thus taken the insensible Bernice was humble enough. It was only a summer home for the shepherds who tended their flocks on the common. The walls were bare and unplastered, the rude boards being blackened with smoke. The furniture consisted of two or more three-legged stools. The floor was black with dirt. There was a capacious chimney, a yawning fireplace, and a roaring wood fire, over which a tea-kettle was hanging. A thick steam came hissing and roaring from the kettle. In a farther corner of the room was a heap of clean straw covered with a new white blanket.

Monk laid Bernice down upon the simple bed, turning her face to the wall that it might not be seen. Then he walked to the fire, warming his hands over the blaze as he said:

"It's a cold morning, Mrs. Crowl. I am glad to see such lively preparations for breakfast. Did you arrive last night?"

"Yes, sir," replied the woman, in a deep, masculine voice. "I walked five miles after dusk to this hut from Darnley. I stayed here alone all night. The young woman is asleep, I see, sir. Did you have any trouble with her?"

"None at all. She is as weak as a little child, and will require the closest care and attention."

He drew one of the wooden stools up to the corner of the hearth and seated himself.

The woman took a shelf from the wall and laid it across two stools, and proceeded to use it as a table, placing upon it a few dishes, which she produced from a basket close at hand.

This woman, Mrs. Crowl, was of singular appearance, and her past career had been such as to justify Monk in placing implicit confidence in her. He had sought her out, discovered that her chief characteristic was avarice—that she would almost sell her soul for money. She had known the bitterest depths of poverty, had once nearly starved to death, and had formed exaggerated ideas of the value of wealth, and a love for money that had become a passion—more, a mania. Monk was skilled in reading character, and he had told this woman a portion of his plans and schemes and enlisted her aid, promising in the event of his success to settle upon her a sum of money which appeared to her a boundless fortune. He had thus bound her to him by ties that were to her a thousand-fold stronger than any ties of affection.

She was a large, tall woman, of powerful frame and massive proportions. Her complexion was fair, somewhat freckled. Her eyes were of steel blue. She was not handsome, nor was she repulsive. She gave one the impression of power, both physical and mental.

This was the woman whom Gilbert Monk had chosen as his chief confederate in the evil course upon which he had entered, and he could not have chosen more wisely for his purposes. Yet even she was not permitted to share his entire confidence. She knew nothing of the discoveries he had recently made in London concerning Bernice's parentage. Gilbert Monk was too astute to place implicit trust and confidence in any human being but himself. While he remained master of his own secrets, he knew well that they were safe.

Mrs. Crowl produced a coffee-pot, and proceeded to make coffee, more for herself than for another. By the time it was made a triple knock was heard on the door, and Flack's voice was heard demanding admittance. Mrs. Crowl let him in. He brought a large hamper from the carriage, and the woman, after politely greeting him with the manner of a mistress, unpacked the hamper and spread a portion of its contents on the bench.

Gilbert Monk and his two confederates ate heartily, and Flack then went out to feed and water his horses. He was gone half an hour or more. When he returned Gilbert Monk was dozing before the

fire, the remnants of the repast had been put away, and Mrs. Crowl had unshuttered the window, and was looking out through the dingy panes of glass upon the wide and desolate common. Flack bestowed only a glance upon her, crept to a corner, and went to sleep on the bare floor.

A little after noon Gilbert Monk awoke with a start, and almost immediately thereafter Bernice stirred upon her bed of straw in the far corner, and murmured a name.

Monk crossed the floor to her side and bent over her. Her eyes opened; she recognized him.

"Oh, Gilbert," she said, faintly, her eyes moving restlessly, "I have had such a hideous dream. Was it a dream about the vault, the cof—"

"Hush, Bernice," said Monk, gently. "It was no dream. It was all true. But you are safe now, and no farther harm can come to you."

"We were in the church, Gilbert. We were on the porch, and then I sat down to rest. Where are we? Is this some cottage on the way to the Park?"

"Yes," said Monk, without compunction of conscience for his falsehoods. "I have brought you a part of the way, and, becoming tired under your weight, have stopped here to rest. These good people have given us shelter and a fire."

"You look tired out, miss," said Mrs. Crowl, darkening the window and approaching the youthful marchioness. "You were fast asleep when the gentleman brought you to my door in his arms. Won't you have a little supper before you go on?"

"What time is it?" asked Bernice.

Mrs. Crowl darted a glance at the window to assure herself that no gleam of the mid-day light penetrated into the room. The red glow of the fire filled the room, illuminating every corner.

"It's past midnight, miss," said Mrs. Crowl, glibly. "My man is asleep, as you see yonder."

The fragrance of steaming hot coffee saluted the girl's nostrils. A faint hunger awoke within her. She arose from the rude bed, pushed back her hood from her wan and ghastly face, and tottered forward to a seat upon one of the stools.

"I feel very strange," she said, faintly. "I am very weak, madam. I will have some coffee, if you please."

Mrs. Crowl hastened to prepare a cup of coffee, putting in secretly a strong dose of narcotic poison, as her employer had directed her to do. She brought this and a plate of daintily sliced cold fowl and sweet biscuits to Bernice, who trifled with the food and drank the coffee to the dregs.

"You'll feel better presently, miss," said Mrs. Crowl, removing the dishes. "The coffee was unusually strong, and will steady your nerves."

"Yes, it does already," said Bernice, favorably, looking at Monk with glittering eyes. "Don't you feel rested, Gilbert? Oh, I am so anxious to get home. I can walk now, if you will allow me. Oh, do let us go!"

She fairly sobbed in her pitiful pleading, and, reaching out her thin, claw-like fingers, she clung to him in agonized beseeching.

"Directly, Bernice," said Monk, drinking his coffee. "I am almost ready. I am getting rested."

"Am I selfish to hurry you so? Oh, I am wild to get home to Roy. He thinks me dead and buried, you know. Every moment spent here seems an age to me. Oh, madam, have you a vehicle in which you could send me home?"

And Bernice turned with a faint hope of assistance to Mrs. Crowl.

"No; we are too poor," responded the woman.

"Perhaps, then, your husband would carry me, and so relieve my friend?" said Bernice. "Won't you ask your husband to carry me home?"

"I wouldn't dare wake him, miss," said Mrs. Crowl. "He's savage when awakened out of his sleep. The gentleman will soon be rested, and will take you himself, miss."

Bernice sighed heavily, and fixed again her piteous gaze upon Monk. He was uneasy under it, and finished his meal mechanically, pondering what excuses he should make to her to account for his farther stay. He at last devised a manner of excuse, and was about to utter it, when he noticed that the girl's head had drooped, and that her eyes were closing again in slumber.

He waited a few moments in silence until her breathing testified to her slumbers, and then he said:

"She is disposed of, Mrs. Crowl. That narcotic will stand our friend throughout the journey. She will sleep now till to-morrow morning."

Disregarding the presence of Mrs. Crowl, who retired to the window, Monk opened his valise and took out his dressing-case, which was well filled with bottles of coloured liquids and dyes.

He selected a bottle and camel's hair pencils, and with the skill of an artist began to paint dark circles under his eyes, and lines along his nose and on his cheeks and wrinkles across his forehead.

He did not shave his full beard, nor dye it, yet the change in him was so great that even Sylvia

Monk would have been puzzled to recognize him at the first glance.

He looked thirty years older than he had looked ten minutes before. His boyishness and *bon homie* of expression were hidden under a mask of lines and wrinkles, so well drawn that no casual observer would have believed them to be the product of art rather than time.

When he had finished he called to Mrs. Crowl. The woman was full of astonishment at the transformation he had effected, and was loud in her praises of his skill.

"I am a master in my way, Mrs. Crowl," he observed. "You will find that I shall sweep all things before me, I know what I am about."

When the shadows of evening began to fall upon the common the carriage was at the door.

Monk carried out Bernice and placed her upon the back seat among soft cushions, well wrapped up. The hamper and various belongings were stowed under the seats.

Mrs. Crowl, wrapped in furs, sat upon the forward seats, her back to the horses, and Monk closed the carriage door and climbed up to the box beside Flack, and they set out on their journey.

Monk had his course carefully marked out upon a small pocket map. He consulted it soon after day-break.

"We must be near the hamlet of Pollock," he said. "There is a very good inn there, kept by a doting octogenarian and his bustling wife. We shall stop there to-day. You have both received full instructions and I shall expect you to adhere to them literally. Flack, you will better put on your big false red beard. It will half cover your face and disguise you completely."

Flack put his hand under his seat and found his valise. He opened it and produced the beard alluded to, put it on, and was satisfied with the disguise it afforded.

About nine o'clock of the dark morning the jaded horses and travel-stained vehicle entered the narrow, grass-grown street of the little hamlet of Pollock, which was a score of miles from any railway station.

Flack drove boldly to the little inn, and into the court-yard.

The mistress of the hotel, with hostler, stable-boy, and bar-maid, came forward to assist them to alight. Gilbert Monk slowly alighted from the box, in his character of elderly gentleman, and raised his hat to the portly inn mistress, saying:

"You are the proprietress of the inn, I take it, madam. My name is Brown. The young lady is my daughter, who is nearly dead of consumption. We desire your best rooms until to-morrow morning, when we must resume our sad journey. My daughter is quite helpless, and when awake is delirious. We are taking her home to die."

The inn mistress was full of commiseration. Monk lifted out Bernice's light figure. The girl's face had been covered by a veil by Mrs. Crowl.

A comfortable parlour with two bed-rooms connecting having been made ready for them, the new comers took possession of them.

Monk's room opened off the cozy little parlour on one side, and on the other side of the parlour was the airy bedroom, with two beds that had been assigned to Bernice and Mrs. Crowl.

The young marchioness was undressed by her attendant, and put in her warm bed. The two conspirators then had their breakfast in the private parlour, Flack being served in the kitchen.

Monk and Mrs. Crowl were still at their breakfast when the inn mistress came up to inquire if she could do anything for the poor young lady, and desiring to know what she could do for her.

"She would like some chicken broth," said Mrs. Crowl. "Her appetite is very poor. She lives almost entirely upon stimulants, poor dear, and they seem to affect her intellect. She has the most horrible ideas. Her mind, somehow, seems to revel in the ghastly and unreal. She is very low and keeps her bed for the most part. I fear we shall hardly get her home alive."

The innkeeper was about to reply when the door of the bedroom opened, and Bernice, wan and spectral, with great, burning eyes, stood upon the threshold.

(To be continued.)

THE FOLLIES OF CIVILIZATION.—It appears that the Japanese have come to the determination to resist some of the follies which afflict a state of over-civilization. The last mail from Japan brought the intelligence that the Mikado has ordered actors, jugglers, and acrobats to bring their performances to a close in the course of three years, when they must find some more honourable employment for their time. It is doubtful, however, whether the Mikado will be able to put down the theatre, which here, at all events, resisted the attacks both of Church and State when both were much more powerful than they are to-day.



[THE MISSING WILL.]

THE WHITE CAMELLIA.

I ALWAYS told mamma she made a mistake in bringing Hope Wayne here. In the first place, Hope is undeniably pretty, and a pretty governess was always my abomination. Secondly, she is clever, and I hate clever women. Thirdly, she is surrounded by an atmosphere of mystery, and mystery is always attractive.

Of course I tried to rid the house of her as speedily as possible. I could not be expected to relish the presence of such a rival. But mamma was obstinate. If Hope was sent away, the care of my sister Lou, aged eight, would devolve upon herself, and she had not the courage to assume such a task. As for another governess, months might elapse before she could find one to her liking.

So Hope remained. It did not matter very much until Ray Braddon came. But his coming put a serious aspect upon affairs at once, for he fell head over heels in love with Hope before he had been in the house twenty-four hours.

Another guest arrived about the same time as Ray. This was Miss Patty Shrimp, a simpering young lady of thirty-nine, who affected cork-screw curls, voluminous flounces, and the artless simplicity of a girl of sixteen.

Miss Shrimp knew that Ray intended paying us a visit, and so had followed close on his heels for the sole purpose of laying siege to his affections.

An odd state of affairs, was it not? Three women underneath one roof, all pulling strings for the same man.

Before two days had elapsed mamma saw her mistake in not having dismissed Hope at once.

"I never thought Mr. Braddon would pass by you, Ethel, to look at her," she said to me, in dire perplexity. "But men are for ever doing the very thing you don't expect them to do."

"Well," I returned, sharply, "how do you expect to help the matter?"

"Send Hope away at once.

The answer vexed me.

"Your remedy is worse than the disease, mamma. But you will not dismiss Hope, at this late hour, with my consent."

Mamma opened wide her eyes.

"I thought you were quite anxious to have her sent away, Ethel."

"And so I was—before the mischief was done! But don't you see that our only hope now is in keeping her under our noses, where we can see everything that transpires? If we drive her out of the house Ray Braddon will follow her, and she can have everything her own way."

"You are right, Ethel. You must marry Mr. Braddon. Of course Patty Shrimp isn't worth taking into account. But Hope Wayne is a dangerous rival, as we have both seen. She must be supplanted in Mr. Braddon's regards. Make her an object of distrust and suspicion, and your work is more than half accomplished. Very many hearts are caught in the rebound, you know."

"Leave me to manage Hope in my own way. I can do it."

"Of course. Only bear in mind the consequences of failure."

"What do you mean?"

"In the first place, no other man so wealthy as Mr. Braddon, or so desirable generally, may ever present himself. In the second place, you ought to know that our hold upon the Erclidonne property is not any too secure. Without it we would be beggars."

When mamma verges upon that theme—the Erclidonne property—there is no end to her talk.

Of course I knew very well to what she referred. There is something peculiar in our family history. My father had a brother who was banished and disinherited for marrying against grandpapa's wishes. When grandpapa lay on his death-bed he relented, and made a will in my uncle's favour. That will could never be found after his death. Some believed

that grandpapa himself destroyed it. But mamma, and a few others, gathered somehow the impression that it was concealed about the house in some unsuspected nook.

I have searched for it, scores of times, without success. It isn't pleasant to have ruin gaping at you from every corner. If I could have found the will I should have destroyed it, of course. What care I for the rights of my unknown cousins?

"How many children has Uncle Robert—do you know?" I asked, abruptly.

"No."

"Has he any grown-up daughters?"

"One, of about your own age, I believe."

That answer set me thinking. Hope Wayne never opened her lips in regard to her past history. Her utter silence was suspicious, to say the least. Was it possible—

Faugh! I would not pursue the subject. If Hope had come to Cragmore under a false name and character, that was her own concern. As for bringing the missing will to light, she is very unlikely to succeed in that.

That same night I was lying wide awake in my bed when the door-knob was softly turned, and a white figure, looking very thin and very ghostly, came gliding into the room.

I knew instantly that the intruder was Miss Shrimp, for the moonlight showed me two or three thin curls fluttering about her thinner face. However, I said, in a voice of well-affected terror:

"Who and what are you?"

Miss Shrimp gave a stifled shriek.

"Then you are really there, Miss Erclidonne?" she cried.

"Of course I am. What do you mean?"

"Get up," she whispered, impressively, "and I'll tell you."

I arose accordingly.

"Come here," said Miss Shrimp, pushing me by main force to the window. "Now look yonder, in the shadow of that linden by the gravel walk."

I did look, and, to my surprise and consternation, saw two figures standing side by side in the part of the garden she indicated.

"Who are they, Miss Shrimp?"

"At first I thought it was you and—and—Mr. Braddon."

"Humph! But you have ascertained that it is not. It must be Hope Wayne."

"Yes," said she. "The shameless creature! How dare she meet him at midnight, when all proper people ought to be in bed?"

Just at this instant the two figures stepped out into the moonlight. We saw them somewhat more distinctly.

Sure enough the lady was Hope Wayne. The gentleman was not Mr. Braddon, however, but an utter stranger.

Miss Shrimp and I looked at each other in dire amazement.

"Mr. Braddon ought to know of this," she said, under her breath.

"He shall," I answered, in the same low tone.

Hope came slowly towards the house, after a few moments, while the gentleman went in the opposite direction.

We heard the verandah door open and close, a soft footfall on the stair, then all was still.

"I am shocked," said Miss Shrimp.

She turned as she spoke and took herself out of the room altogether.

At breakfast the next morning we all met. Hope's eyes were red, as if she had been weeping. She seemed so miserable that any other woman would have pitied and spared her. But I could not afford to do either.

"Have you been making new acquaintances in the neighbourhood, Miss Wayne?" I asked, innocently.

She raised her eyes to my face.

"No," she answered, simply.

Miss Shrimp gave a sudden start.

"You'd better not have told us that."

Then she turned to Mr. Braddon, who was watching us all in real perplexity.

"What is your opinion of young ladies who keep clandestine appointments with gentlemen at midnight?" she asked.

"They must be one of two things—very foolish or very wicked."

I had never heard him speak in a tone so cold and hard. I looked at Hope. She was ghastly white and seemed ready to faint.

"What is the matter?" I cried, anxious to call everybody's attention to her emotion. "Are you ill, Miss Wayne?"

She gave me a glance of piteous entreaty, and replied, in a scarcely audible voice:

"Only a little faint. I shall be better directly."

Sure enough she called the colour back to her cheeks almost instantly.

"Since Miss Wayne is herself again," said Miss Shrimp, after a little, slowly sipping her coffee as she spoke, "let us return to the subject of the clan-

destine meeting. I trust neither of us is guilty of such imprudences."

Just here she looked hard at Hope.

Mr. Braddon's glance naturally followed hers, and I saw him bite his lip.

When breakfast was over Hope left the table somewhat abruptly. Mr. Braddon followed her into the hall, and through a crack in the door I saw him clasp her hand in his, and thus detain her.

"What did those idiots mean?" he asked, savagely, every word distinctly reaching my ears.

"I don't know," faltered Hope. "Oh, please let me go, Mr. Braddon."

"And leave me in such suspense? I cannot."

She hesitated a moment, and then lifted her pure eyes to his face.

If I had been a man I could never have withstood such a gaze—so innocent and yet so enticing. Ray Braddon could not withstand it.

He stooped suddenly as if to gather her into his arms.

She repulsed him.

"Do you believe I have been guilty of any real imprudence?" she asked, softly.

"No, no, no."

"Then do not seek to question me. I can tell you nothing if you do—at least now."

He covered her hand with kisses.

"Let me tell you something," he cried; "how madly I love you. Hark! there are footsteps approaching. If you return my regard, and will become my wife, wear this in your hair at dinner."

He tore a white camellia from his button-hole and thrust it into her hand. In another instant she had fled precipitately along the hall.

Of course the noise that had interrupted Mr. Braddon's billing and cooing was made by myself.

I thought it high time to put an end to a *titte-à-tit* that was likely to result so disastrously, so far as my own plans were concerned.

Miss Shrimp had heard nothing, and I did not think best to enlighten her in regard to the scene that had transpired in the hall.

Idiot! Ray Braddon had dared class me with wisdom-faced Miss Shrimp, and had denominated us idiots. Just Heaven! how my teeth clicked at the remembrance.

"He shall pay dearly for this insult," I hissed, and meant it too.

Patient waiters are seldom losers. When Hope came out of her chamber to go down to dinner that day I was loitering in the passage, ready to receive her.

As I expected, the white camellia was in her hair. She had accepted Ray, for the wore his gift that was to be the token of acceptance.

I could have killed her at that moment. She looked so modest, so innocent and sweetly conscious, with a rare joy lighting up her tender brown eyes, that a heart of stone might have been touched by her loveliness.

"Hope, dear," said I, gently, "what has happened to make you look so happy?"

She did not answer, but shrank away from me slightly, and dropped her eyes.

"Come here," I went on. "That camellia is dropping from your hair. Let me arrange it more securely."

It was delightful to see the warm blood mount to her forehead and redden the peach-like bloom of her cheeks.

"Will you?" she exclaimed, pressing eagerly to my side. "I shall be very grateful."

She dropped her graceful head, and in another minute I was crushing the hateful flower in the palm of my hand, and waiting for an opportunity to transfer it to my pocket.

"It is all right now," I said, hastily. "Come, dinner is waiting."

We entered the dining-room together. Ray and mamma were already seated at the table. Hope stole one swift glance at her lover, and then looked quickly away.

For a moment I pitied the poor fellow. His eyes, and indeed his whole face, lighted up with eager expectancy at the sight of Hope. When he looked for the camellia and found it was not there he turned ghastly pale, however, and leaned heavily against the table.

"Idiot!"

But for the memory of that word I might have restored the stolen blossom even then.

Miss Shrimp made her appearance just in time to relieve any embarrassment two or three of us might have felt, and the bustle she created gave Ray time to recover himself.

She wore a pink dress, elaborately flounced, and pink ribbons fluttered above her thin hair and adorned every available portion of her dress. Her cork-screw curls just touched her lean shoulders.

"She stoops to conquer," I whispered in Ray's ear.

Miss Shrimp must have caught the words, or at least comprehended their significance, for the glance she gave me from under her scant lashes would have annihilated a less courageous person than myself.

"That was a foolish jest," I thought. "It will not answer to make an enemy of her."

However, my powers of mind were fully occupied for the next few minutes in watching Ray and Hope. The latter seated herself and kept her eyes fixed upon her plate at first. Presently she stole a second glance at Ray—a shy, deprecating look, as if eager but too modest to let him know how well she loved him.

He met that glance with a cold, unmeaning stare. Hope caught her breath sharply. I saw her bosom heave and two great pearls rise to her lovely orbs; but she was too proud to let them fall.

She knew that something was wrong, but of course did not suspect the truth. I am sure she thought Ray had repented of his hasty proposal, or perhaps was shocked by her readiness to respond to his advances.

Ray did not once speak to her. He was fully as talkative as usual after the first few minutes, but addressed all his remarks to Miss Shrimp or myself.

When dinner was over and Hope prepared to withdraw I arose with her and accompanied her upstairs.

"That troublesome flower!" I muttered, stopping her in the hall. "It is ready to fall out again."

Under pretence of arranging the camellia I restored it to its old place among her braids.

Hope quietly submitted, but I read half-suspicion in her tell-tale eyes. The instant we reached her bedroom she looked at herself in the mirror.

"I hate that ghastly thing!" she cried, with a sudden burst of passion, tearing out the camellia and flinging it from her. "I will not wear it."

She burst into tears. I went up to her and put my arms around her neck and kissed her. Since that moment I have realized as I never did before how Judas must have felt when he betrayed his Master.

"What is the matter, Hope, dear?" I asked.

"Why do you weep?"

I felt her shiver in my embrace as if some subtle instinct warned her against me.

"I cannot tell you," she faltered. "Please go away. I shall be better presently."

Of course I went, glad enough to leave her now that my work was so well done.

She and Ray avoided each other for the next few days. They never exchanged a word unless actually compelled to do so.

"It's a good thing for you and me that we gave Mr. Braddon to understand what we saw the other night," said Miss Shrimp, at last, referring to the coldness that had crept between these two in whom we were both so deeply interested.

I nodded but did not enlighten her.

That detestable old maid smirked and simpered and made herself more ridiculous than ever. She evidently believed in the theory of hearts being caught in the rebound, and meant to improve her opportunities.

So did I. If Ray did not yield to my allurements it should be through no fault of my own.

Miss Shrimp was in my way, unluckily. She evidently read my purpose as clearly as I read hers, and would not allow me a minute's private conversation with Ray if she could prevent it.

To do him justice he never sought to see me alone. I soon saw that some bold move was necessary, if I hoped to accomplish anything before he and Hope came to an understanding.

One day I coaxed him to the piano, under pretence of singing a duet with me.

Miss Shrimp sat at the other end of the room, copying some receipts in a blank-book. She seemed wholly absorbed in her occupation, but I knew she was secretly watching us from the corners of her little pink eyes.

"Mr. Braddon," I said, making a great crashing among the keys, hoping thus to drown my voice as far as Miss Shrimp was concerned, "you do not seem like yourself of late. I am afraid you are tired of Cragnore, and of us all."

"Oh, no, no!" he answered, quickly.

"I am glad of that. How can I give you to understand how glad mamma and I are to have you with us?"

"Stuff him with sage and onion," repeated Miss Shrimp, in a perfectly audible voice, at the same time copying the words in her receipt-book.

I knew she meant the quotation for my benefit, and, though I flushed to the roots of my hair, I was determined not to be outgeneralled.

"How shall I prove to you the sincerity of my friendship, Mr. Braddon?" I persisted, lowering my voice, and giving him a languishing look.

That horrible creature caught even these words.

"To seven pints of soft water put one pound of lean beef," she went on.

"I know you are unhappy, Mr. Braddon, and I sincerely desire to be your friend. I wish you would confide your troubles to me."

"Pigs' ears may be scraped, and made into jelly," said Miss Shrimp.

Ray could not restrain a smile.

As for myself, I longed to choke the malicious creature.

"You are very kind, Miss Ercildoune," he said, after a pause. "I fully appreciate your goodness. But since I am not free to tell the cause of my trouble, how shall I convince you how grateful I am for your comforting words?"

"Put them into a saucepan with a tablespoonful of mustard."

I could endure no more.

Down went the piano-lid with a crash, and I rushed from the room, put to utter rout by that aggravating spinster.

Of course I was compelled to apologize for my rudeness afterwards; but Ray only laughed at the whole unlucky scene.

He did not betray the least vexation, as he must have done if he really cared for me.

Never mind. He shall love me yet! I will sit like patience on a monument, and work and plan and plot until I gain my end, though seven thousand lank old maids stand in the way.

As the twilight came on I saw Hope go out for a long walk. Something prompted me to follow her.

She went straight across the fields, and disappeared in a wood beyond.

When I reached the denser shadow of the shrubbery in my turn I saw Hope standing at a little distance, leaning upon the arm of a very handsome young man.

What could it mean? Was she playing a double part?

I thought to creep nearer and listen to their conversation. Scarce half a dozen stealthy steps had been taken, however, when a twig cracked sharply close behind me. Turning, I found Ray standing there, his white face gleaming strangely through the darkness.

"Come away, Ethel," he said, in a hoarse whisper.

"This is no place for such as you."

He caught my hand almost roughly, and dragged me unresisting towards the open fields. He did not speak again until we were clear of the woods.

"Do you know that—that villain yonder?" he asked then, in a voice not his own.

"No."

"Has Miss Wayne ever alluded to him in any manner in your presence?"

"Never," was my truthful answer.

"You have seen her with him once before, if I am not mistaken?"

"I have."

"One night—at midnight—in the garden?"

"Yes. Miss Shrimp and I saw them."

A deep breath that was almost a groan escaped him. He caught my hand and wrung it hard.

"I believe what you said to me to-day," he whispered. "You are the best and truest friend I have here. Oh, what a false, bad world this is!"

He dropped his head on his breast, and stalked on beside me. But he said no more. The words for which I listened so impatiently did not come.

It does not matter. He shall be made to utter them ere long. I have gained something already. Another step and victory is mine!

Victory! What does it mean? The man I love for my husband, and boundless wealth at my command. What more can I crave?

That night is like a blank. Early the next morning some errand took me upstairs to the tower room. It is the chamber where grandpapa died, and is never used now.

To my extreme consternation, the door, which is usually kept locked, stood ajar. I approached it noiselessly, and pushed it open.

Hope Wayne was within, searching the drawers of a cabinet that stood against the opposite wall. At the sound of my step she started up with a frightened shriek.

I shall never forget the terror and dismay depicted in her countenance. She stared at me a moment as if petrified. Every vestige of colour faded slowly from her face.

"Why are you here?" I demanded. "What business have you in this chamber?"

Starting forward, I clutched fiercely at her arm. She eluded me—the power of locomotion seemed suddenly to return to her limbs—and with a long, low moan of utter despair she rushed from the apartment.

I dropped into the nearest chair, nearer fainting than I had ever been in my life before.

One doubt is dispelled for ever; the mystery that surrounded Hope is a mystery no longer. She is Uncle Robert's daughter. I know it. She has heard of the will and has come to this house for no other purpose than to search for it; that is what she was doing in the tower chamber.

I did not stir from my chair for at least an hour, but all my powers of mind were busy during those sixty minutes. At last I resolved to see Ray, and, under pretence of asking him advice, tell him all I knew about Hope.

Downstairs I went, eager to put my resolve into

execution. Ray was not in the morning-room. I sought the verandah, and there he sat with both elbows upon the railing, his whole attitude betraying extreme dejection.

Experience has taught me that a man in trouble is easily wrought upon. The coast was clear, so far as I knew. With a confident step I stole to his side and dropped my hand on his arm.

"A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Braddon," I said, with softened gaiety.

He looked up at me, and forced a smile.

"They were not worth so much, Miss Ethel."

"Please tell me what they were, and let me be the judge."

I know that my eyes were eloquent with sympathy and emotion. My hand had slid down until it rested upon his own. He caught it suddenly, wrung it hard, and some sudden avowal trembled upon his lips.

The words were never uttered, however. Just at this inopportune moment an odour of musk—Miss Shrimp's favourite perfume—greeted my nostrils, and that omnipresent spinster came gliding up the terrace.

She was dressed in white. A big red rose was pinned at her throat, another was perched above the left ear, and her boucans were looped on either side with the same gaudy flowers.

"Well met," she simpered, bowing and smiling, but not forgetting to shoot at me a malignant glance from under her short lashes. "I came up just in time to join in your *tit-e-tit*."

An amused twinkle crept into Ray's eyes, but, as for me, I was angry enough to have choked her. "Really, Miss Shrimp," he said, defying his hat to her, "you might pass for the Goddess of Roses—if there is such a deity."

She tried to blush, but only failed lamentably in the attempt.

"Flatterer!" she cried, tossing her head and twirling her fan. "Don't you know it is wrong to feed a woman's vanity, Mr. Braddon? They have too much of it at best."

I gave up the attempt to exchange a few words in private with Ray, and left him to the tender mercies of Miss Shrimp.

Shall I tell mamma what I have discovered in regard to Hope? No; upon second thought I'll keep my own secret for the present. But if that girl remains in the house I shall keep a close watch upon her movements. That, at least, is due to my myself, under the circumstances.

Oh, sweet Goddess of Love, thou blessed divinity, let me sing thy praises! After waiting long and anxiously and almost hopelessly, I have found my affinity at last.

What can be more divine than the union of two congenial spirits, whose hearts pulsate together as if one bosom held them, which only entertain thoughts common to both, and which are bound together by the irresistible but never-rusting chain of mutual love?

Every nerve in my body thrills and tingles when I think of Ray Braddon. He is a good deal more than my fancy painted him. Ah, blessed moment when he shall clasp me to his heart and call me his adorable Patty!

I know he is burning to do so at this very moment. There are a thousand nameless signs by which congenial spirits learn each other's desires. But he is deterred by the cruel machinations of two young chits.

The course of true love never did run smooth—no, never. Hope Mayne and Ethel Erildoune are the disturbing elements in my case. They are mad enough to think that Ray can be made to pass my more mature charms by, and fall, like a ripe cherry, into their open mouths.

Poor simpletons! I have been laughing in my sleeve at them ever since I came to Cragmore. There is no end to some folks' folly. Neither young vixen can hold a candle to me, and they'd know it too if they had the sense of a mouse.

Ray has not breathed one word of love as yet. But he looks at me in a manner that cannot be mistaken, and rolls up his eyes until their eloquent glances say unutterable things. As for me, I am divinely happy. I never before dreamed what bliss is to be found in reciprocated love.

I sigh for some vast lodge in the wilderness where there is no one but Ray to make the height and depth of my great happiness.

By the way, I wonder if he knows that I paint and pad and pencil my eyebrows, and wear false teeth?

It matters little, however. Such things are expected of women in this enlightened age. These things would seem trifles light as air to one who loves so fervently.

Now let me say one word concerning my would-be rivals.

Hope Mayne would pass for a very lovely girl where there were no counter attractions. Even Ray was inclined to be sweet on her at first. But Ethel and I speedily cured him of that nonsense.

As for Ethel herself she is sly and cunning. I have to keep my eye on her continually, or she would manage to compromise Ray in some manner; and then, of course, he would feel in honour bound to marry her, though his heart was given to another.

There is no end to her artifices.

For instance I was leaning out of my bedroom window to-day, buried in sweet and pensive reverie, when I heard a step on the gravel walk below.

Looking down, I saw Ray pacing slowly backward and forward, with his head fallen upon his breast, and his arms folded.

Just as I was about to wave my handkerchief and thus attract his attention Ethel came tripping down the terrace steps, swinging her garden hat.

She went straight up to Ray—the brazen creature.

"Will you walk with me?" I heard her say. "I wish to ask your advice on a subject of considerable importance."

Of course he could do no less than offer his arm. I saw through her cunning trick in an instant. She meant to get him out of my reach, and wheedle an offer of marriage from him.

Desperately resolved that she should not outwit me, I snatched up a scarf, flung it over my fluttering curls, and rushed downstairs.

Two minutes later I had overtaken the pair, and was pushing my hand under Ray's disengaged arm. "Forget me," I said, sweetly, at that same time giving him a languishing glance. "I observe that you and Miss Erildoune are going for a walk. May I join you?"

"To be sure," he answered.

And I knew he heaved a sigh of relief.

Ethel looked black as a thunder-cloud.

She gnashed her teeth at me behind Ray's back, and her countenance took on such a vindictive expression that I feel half afraid she will poison me yet, to get me out of the way.

Ray and I had the whole conversation to ourselves—Ethel was too angry to talk.

After a turn or two in the shrubbery she accused herself and returned to the house.

Ray did not follow her; I was clinging fast hold of his arm, and he could not.

We wandered about the garden for at least an hour afterwards, and he looked so pensive all the while that I was sure a declaration was at his tongue's end, but he did not feel sure enough of my regard to give it utterance.

Is it not a woman's duty to encourage a man in such a predicament? I think so, and at last I said, in my sweetest treble:

"What is more delightful, Mr. Braddon, than the sympathy that exists between kindred souls?"

"What, indeed?" he answered, putting up his handkerchief to hide his emotion.

Then I sighed. He didn't hear me. I sighed again, and waited for his arm to slide about my waist. In another minute it would have been there had not the bell summoned us to dinner.

Huzza, Patty Shrimp, huzza! One more effort, and victory will perch upon your banner, as sure as fate.

It is hard to be compelled to play a part—doubly hard to sit day after day at anybody's table and feel that you are a wolf in sheep's clothing, and are only there to work them ill.

But I think there was some excuse for me. Brother George and I were alone in the world, and poor as church mice. George must go to college, and where was the money to come from?

We tried to solve the riddle in a thousand ways, and were disappointed every time. At last we thought of grandpapa's will, which was said to be hidden in some room at Cragmore. By that will nearly all the Erildoune property had been left to poor papa.

"I shall search for it," I said to George, one day. "We have been defrauded of our rights long enough. I am going to Cragmore to search for the missing will."

George tried to dissuade me at first, but soon became as deeply interested in the matter as myself. Luckily for my plans, Aunt Erildoune advertised for a governess about that time, and I answered the advertisement, assuming the name of Wayne.

I need say but little more. I came to Cragmore. The tower chamber seemed the proper place to search for the will, and I have stolen thither scores of times for that purpose.

Ethel encountered me there one morning. I was nearly frightened out of my wits, and gave up all as lost. I was sure she must suspect who I was, and why I was there.

That day was one long horror of suspense. I expected momentary summons to a family conclave in my aunt's room. But no such summons came. Then I was tempted to run away. But that would have seemed weak and foolish, and I did not wish to be considered either one or the other.

George has met me often in a wood near the house—once in the garden itself. He was coming

again that night. I resolved to wait and see what he would advise.

At twilight I stole out to meet him. In half-a-dozen words I gave him to understand what had happened. He seemed inclined to laugh at my fears, and make light of the affair.

"I don't believe Cousin Ethel suspected your real purpose in going to the tower chamber," he said. "She must have thought curiosity led you thither. Make one more attempt, Hope, before you give it up as a bad bargain."

I promised, very reluctantly, and we separated. On the way back to Cragmore, as I drew near the house, I came face to face with Ray Braddon in one of the gravel walks.

He nodded very coldly, and seemed about to pass me. Then he stood still, of a sudden, and caught my hand in his, while his face grew ghastly white.

"Heaven forgive you, Hope," he cried. "You have broken my heart."

"What do you mean?" I faltered, trembling all over, and scarcely knowing whether to be most frightened or angry.

"You led me on to believe that you loved me. And then, then, you cruelly slighted my love."

I stared at him in speechless amazement. "What did he mean? His own coldness was killing me, and here he was accusing me of indifference."

At last I found voice.

"Surely there—there—must be some mistake! I never—"

A foot stepped on the gravel path just then, and Miss Shrimp glided up to us through the purple twilight.

"Truant!" she cried, dropping her hand upon Ray's arm. "I've been searching for you this half-hour. Come in, please, and we will have a game of chess."

Of course my confession was cut short. I drew my hand away from his clasp, and fled towards the house.

In the solitude of my own chamber I found plenty of time for conjecture. Had Ray really loved me all the while, and had I cruelly misjudged him? My brain was in a tumult. I knew not what to think, what to hope, or what to expect.

I don't like to dwell upon the miserable night I passed. The next morning, the moment I was at liberty, I went straight to the tower chamber with the stern determination to make my search more rigid than ever.

The old cabinet seemed the most likely place in which to look. I had hunted for hidden drawers and secret springs over and over again.

Now I took the lower drawers out one by one, piling them upon the floor.

The last one fell with a crash from my nerveless fingers. I heard a clicking sound, and a small panel slid out of the bottom, revealing a small receptacle.

The drawer had a false bottom, and in this strange hiding-place lay a yellow paper tied with red tape.

For a minute I trembled so that I could scarcely stand.

Then I snatched up the paper and read, just underneath the seal, these words:

"The last will and testament of Edward Erildoune."

Found—found at last!

I had replaced the drawers, and was thinking of all the precious documents would do for George, when the door opened suddenly, and Ethel crossed the threshold.

There was something awful in the look she gave me. She seemed to comprehend everything in a second's space. With a scream of hate and fury she rushed upon me.

"I know what you have found," she hissed between her teeth. "And you shall never leave the room alive with that paper."

Her slender fingers clutched at my throat with murderous energy. She flung herself upon me with such mad desperation that I was like a child in her grasp.

"Help, help!" I shrieked, the words dying away in a gurgling noise, while the room seemed to spin round and round.

Footsteps came dashing up the stairs. Ethel released her hold, and when I came to a realising sense of what was transpiring around me I was leaning weak and giddy against the wall, and Aunt Erildoune, Miss Shrimp and Ray were all in the room.

I still held the will clutched in one hand, however.

Aunt Erildoune saw it, glanced quickly up at me, then flushed purple.

"What is the meaning of all this confusion?" she demanded, haughtily.

"I have found the will," I gasped, laughing hysterically, and looking very silly I have no doubt.

"I've found grandpapa's will."

She drew a deep breath and stared hard at me.

"What are you, pray?"

"Your niece, Hope Erskindone."
There was a minute's silence, which Ethel broke by a harsh laugh.

"It is true, mamma," said she, recklessly. "That girl holds the winning cards, and you and I are beggars."

At that I stepped forward a few paces, and threw myself at Ethel's feet.

"Don't look at me like that," I pleaded. "It is not for myself that I wanted this money, but for George, my brother. He is in the village now, waiting to hear from me. We shall not take one penny over half, no matter what the will may give us."

Ethel stood over me panting a moment. Then she started, and a sudden crimson swept over her face.

"I am not to be outdone in generosity," she said, at last, in a palpitating voice. "Ray Braddon," turning swiftly, "let me make a confession. This little simpleton loves you with all her heart, and it is I who have come between you. She would have worn that white camellia you gave her some days ago, but I removed it from her hair without her knowledge. I am humbled enough without saying more."

Then she swept towards the door with the air of a dethroned queen, haughty and beautiful even in her fall.

"Come, mamma," she added, and was gone. Ray stood and stared at me a minute, as if he did not fully comprehend. Then he opened his arms.

"Oh, my darling," he cried, rapturously. Before I could reach his side Miss Shrimp had fallen upon his neck, and was hugging him with inconceivable ardour. Evidently she thought the gesture intended for her benefit.

"Oh, my glorious affinity," she shrieked. "I knew that this moment would come at last."

Ray put her from him as gently as possible.

"Hope," he whispered, "it is you I mean. It is you I love with all my heart and soul."

I knew it now, and crept into his arms, and we spoke in subdued voices of the miserable days of doubt and suspicion through which we had passed into this marvellous happiness. R. W.

FACETIE.

FANCY BRED.—An advertiser in the *Telegraph* says, "Wanted a Baker, second-hand." We should have thought stale would have been the term applied to a "doughy" who was not absolutely new. A following advertisement commences, "To Master Bakers," but it doesn't tell us how, although the pertinacity of our purveyor makes the knowledge very desirable.—*Fun*.

EVIDENT GENIUS.

EMMY (Mamma's Volunteer Secretary): "How is this to be answered, Kitty? I don't know what to say!"—(Reads)—"Mrs. Fitzmode at home on the 30th inst. from four to six o'clock."

Kitty: "Well, I should write and say mamma did not know Mrs. Fitzmode had been away, but wonders she should return to stop only two hours."—*Punch*.

THE COAL FAMINE.

Wife: "Oh, Charles, how kind of the Browns!"—(Reads)—"Mrs. Brown presents her compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and hopes they will give her the pleasure of their company at a fire party on Monday, March 3rd.—Fire lighted at 6.30."—*Punch*.

Old Lady: "Threepence! Why, I've ridden this way a hundred times, and never paid more than twopenny!"

Conductor: "A hundred times, 'm? Let me see! Then you owe the company eight-and-fourpence, 'm! Would you like to settle with me now, 'm, or shall I?"—[*Old Lady retreats precipitately.*—*Punch*.]

A CARTE DE VISITE.

The School Board should blush through all its fibres and hide its diminished block head when it sees how animals and inanimate objects can be taught what it has hitherto failed to teach the human child.

Pony and cart for hire, to collect orders or deliver goods; can read and write well; knows town; good references. Address, etc.

We suppose there is a division of labour here, and that the pony reads—and draws—while the cart writes and knows town by cart—we mean heart.—*Fun*.

DIFFERENT VIEWS.—A Boston printer was found, soon after the recent fire, sitting on a cool stone in front of his establishment, and indulging, by the looks of his countenance, in a "swell of sorrow." A religious editor was passing by and stopped to look at him, saying at the same time, "Your heart, my poor friend and brother, seems sad and your soul melted by this fearful visitation of Providence." "No, darn it!" said the printer, elevating himself

with some show of energy; "but it's my type that's melted; and for Providence—I wish it had been in Providence." Both are now at work again, actively as larks; but it is funny how differently men take things.

LOVE AND LAW.—A forlorn damsel sued a nice young man the other day for refusing or neglecting to marry her. The facts relied on by the defence were somewhat unique. The parties were to have been married on Easter Sunday last, but some weeks before the happy day the swain fell in love with "somebody else" and offered to give his first love a denouement of 2l. if she would let him off, which liberal offer was accepted, but, sad to say, the swain proved as faithless to his promise to pay as in his other promise, whereupon the fair one employed a lawyer to commence an action to recover the 2l., who instituted a suit for the first breach instead of the second, and the jury, thinking probably that 2l. was a very small price to set upon a husband, awarded the disconsolate damsel 100l., which sum, however, if recovered, would not do more than pay her lawyer's bill. Such are the perils of law and litigation and prove the truth of the old song:

It is good to be merry and wise,
'Tis good to be honest and true,
'Tis good to be off with the old law
Before you begin with the new.

TWO DAYS.

Not a rift in the cheerless gray;

Nor smile in the mournful air;

Shadows lurk in the shadowed way,

And gloom is everywhere.

Doubt stands out like a giant master,

Owning life and me;

He summons shade, and shade comes faster—

Ah, it is and to be!

Some may dream of a happy morning,

But more must lie awake.

To watch, without a hope of dawning,

Clouds that never break.

Not a cloud in the silent blue,

Not a sigh in the air;

Shades are lost in the sunshine new,

And light is everywhere.

Faith stands out in the golden weather,

Loyal, plain to see;

Faith and I are linked together,

Faith is one with me.

I cannot think we were ever parted

Under this smiling sun;

I cannot think of myself weak-hearted

Now Faith and I are one.

There is no darkness—there has been never—

Nor will there be, I wot;

Life is love, and the sun shines ever—

Doubt and we are not.

R. W. E.

GEMS.

LAZINESS begins in cobwebs, and ends in iron chains.

DUTY is the first step to greatness—the helm that steers man safely over the billows of life. If we fall in our duty we bid farewell to the land of promise—to the haven of hope. Man's honourable occupation is gone.

He who maintains the right, though contumacious by the few, must forego all expectations of popularity till there shall be less to censure than applaud in human conduct; and when this is the case the millennium will have dawned.

There is no greater every-day virtue than cheerfulness. This quality in man among men is like sunshine to the day, or gentle, renewing moisture to parched herbs. The light of a cheerful face diffuses itself, and communicates the happy spirits that inspire it. The sourest temper must sweeten in the atmosphere of continuous good humour.

HUMOUR AND MELANCHOLY.—That a humorous man should be melancholy is what we might naturally expect, for humour is precisely due to the combination of a deep sense of pathos with a keen eye for the incongruities of the world; and the humourist is powerful in proportion as he can make us cry and laugh at the same time.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

QUICK-MADE INDIAN PUDDING.—Two quarts of sweet milk; heat until ready to boil; have two eggs well beaten with two heaping tablespoonfuls of sugar; put a small piece of butter and a little salt in the boiling milk; sprinkle with the hand and stir in a teaspoon of Indian meal; stir in the eggs

quick; bake quick in a hot oven; raisins improve it.

DIPHTHERIA.—In the earliest stages, when there are only soreness and swelling in the throat, gargle the throat every ten minutes with strong salt water; at the same time dip three-folds of flannel in boiling salt water, press it out between folds of a towel, so as not to dribble, apply it to the throat as hot as the patient can bear it, covering it with a dry and larger flannel, so as to keep the hot flannel in close contact with the skin; renew this at each gargling, sprinkling fine salt on the side of the successive flannels which will touch the skin. But always remember that the sense of prostration is so insufferable that the system must be supported every hour with beef tea, or other form of stimulant. The two symptoms always present in diphtheria are a very offensive breath and dreadful debility.

STATISTICS.

OUR FOREIGN MEAT SUPPLY.—In the year 1872 the import of bacon into the United Kingdom increased to the enormous quantity of 1,841,392 cwt., of the value of 3,773,665l., and the import of hams to 155,353 cwt., of the value of 402,964l. The other imports of pork, almost all salted, show a decrease to 218,383 cwt., of the value of 450,185l. The import of beef, chiefly salted, also declined in 1872 to 228,803 cwt., of the value of 341,122l. The import of mutton "preserved" otherwise than by salting continues to show a large increase, and amounted in 1872 to 352,023 cwt., of the value of 906,680l., and import of other meat unenumerated, salted or fresh, amounted to 55,536 cwt., of the value of 138,645l. The import of live animals in 1872 was not equal to that of the preceding year. The number of oxen imported declined from 135,133 in 1871 to 110,537 in 1872, cows from 78,339 to 28,840, calves from 40,139 to 33,525, sheep and lambs from 916,799 to 809,817, swine from 85,622 to only 16,101. The declared value of the animals imported in 1872 was 4,392,978l., viz.: oxen 2,131,451l., cows 430,257l., calves 112,841l., sheep and lambs 1,666,357l., swine 51,582l.

MISCELLANEOUS.

An enthusiastic antiquary, at a Parisian sale, recently paid no less than 900l. for a pistol of the time of Henri II.

THE CASTOR OIL PLANT.—The castor oil plant is now cultivated in California, and an average crop of four hundred pounds of oil to the acre is obtained.

THE TELEGRAPH IN JAPAN.—It is said that the lower classes in Japan are afraid of the telegraph, not being able to see how the thing works. They fancy the whole arrangement is a device of the evil one.

AN ART DISCOVERY.—There is reason to believe that the long-lost portrait of Molière, painted by Sebastian Bourdon, has been discovered among the Ingria collection at the museum of Montauban, and that it was restored by the latter painter, who purchased it at a dealer's sale.

WOOD PULP.—Prince Bismarck's paper mills at Varcin cannot meet the English demand for the paste board which is manufactured from pine wood in them. The present mills work up annually 600 cords of wood, and a new factory is being built which will consume in this production 1,500 cords. The prince has purchased adjacent forests, which will supply him with raw materials for this manufacture for years to come.

THE PEACE STRENGTH OF THE GERMAN ARMY.—The peace strength of the Imperial German army is at present fixed at 401,659, being 973 per cent. on the estimated number of 41,000,000 of souls. Constitutionally this percentage could at any time be raised to 1 per cent., or 410,000 men. Prussia, when alone, kept up a peace army at the rate of 1/955 per cent. of the then population. In France the estimate is for 1/157 per cent.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.—Baron Grant, head of a well-known banking firm, has written offering to contribute 100l. towards the formation of a society having for its object the amendment of the existing law as to persons under restraint, with a view to the carrying out in practice that doctrine so much vaunted in theory that a man "should be considered innocent until found guilty."

CURIOUS OBJECTS DISCOVERED IN ROME.—Amongst a variety of curious objects lately found in the excavations of Rome are portions of a net found at the Esquiline, pieces of woollen stuff blackened by time, and having the appearance of contact with fire, but still preserving their elasticity, and the remnants of a straw mat much discoloured. These objects were found in a large room in which a public wash-house is supposed to have been established.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. H. (Walworth).—The mode of procedure would be to indict him for a nuisance.

A COUNTRY GIRL.—1. By cutting them. 2. Yes, extremely good as an article of diet. The Highlanders for example thrive vigorously upon it.

JAMES H.—Artemus Ward (Charles Brown), the kindly American humourist, died at Southampton, March 6th, 1867.

WIDOW B.—We rather think that you ought to administer, and so make the business correctly formal. But consult a solicitor, acquainting him with the entire facts. The expense would be quite trifling.

R. H. S.—Miss Weatherhill was executed for the murder of the Rev. James Plou, of Todmorden, and his servant maid (for revenge), on the 4th of April, 1833, at Manchester.

LATIN.—Literally the words mean "brighter out of darkness" and they may be applied to any emergence from adversity or misfortune. Noble-minded men alone can thus rise out of the abyss of suffering. Clarior is the comparative degree of the adjective clarus, which etymologically is connected with the English word clear.

POLITICIAN.—Lord Palmerston died at Brockton Hall, October 18, 1865. He was within two days of completing his eighty-first year, and had sat in the House since 1806, when he entered it as Member for Horsham. He was buried with public honours in Westminster Abbey on October 27.

PAGANINI REDIVIVUS.—We do not think he is a native of Scotland. The original Paganini was a wonderful performer, and created a great and general sensation in his day. His style was something unique; and we believe his present namesake altogether justifies the high opinion you express.

C. R.—Your question is most puzzling. Curds and whey of course are the products of the manufacture of cheese, and there can be no very special manner in which they can be made. As you date from Hampshire, itself an agricultural county, any farmer would give you accurate information. But in truth there is no mystery in the matter.

J. H. M.—Thanks for your verses, which, however, we are unable to use. They hardly reach the requisite standard, though the versification is perfectly fluent. In your poem entitled "A Thought" you express a thought which is novel but not strictly correct. You say, "Great virtues to which death gives birth." Now it is certain that death can give birth to nothing—virtues or otherwise.

G. R.—Electricity produced by heating or cooling certain crystals is called Pyro-Electricity. The phenomenon is this—Certain crystals, among which are tourmaline, boracite, topaz, arimate, prehnite, etc., on being heated exhibit electric excitement. Thus, a crystal of tourmaline becomes positively electrified at one extremity, and negatively at the other. In boracite some of the faces are electrified positively and some negatively. If a tourmaline thus electrified is kept hot, it soon loses this electric polarity, and resumes its natural condition, and if it then is allowed to cool, that end which formerly was positive becomes negative, and vice versa.

TIERRA.—Your composition is conceived in the style of Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy. It is too high-flown, too rhapsodical, and abounds unduly in epithets. By maturer practice you ought to attain a complete mastery over composition, for your language is even too redundant. Avoid the piling up of irrelevant adjectives. The excess of them rather weakens than improves the composition. "Frank affection and sunny atmosphere of home" seems singular. The atmosphere is not to be credited with the possession of affection or with any other sentient faculty. While thus criticizing your lines we think by careful study you would ultimately produce something really good. Make another attempt.

ADELAIDE.—We are not in the least degree shocked by your reading Byron. On the contrary we confess we should be shocked with the illiterate prejudice of any person who declined to read him. Assuredly the misfortune would not be Byron's. Byron ranks among the greatest of all poets, not of England alone but of the world. Regarding his poem Don Juan, which claims to be a satire, it contains some of the finest things in the language. The death of Haidée and the "Isles of Greece" by themselves abundantly attest that statement. But we must inform you that Don Juan is only a fictitious personage, the creation of the poet's brilliant fancy. No doubt he has had imitators, but the personal Don in question never existed. However we believe the general story is of

Spanish origin, and the subject has moreover been worked out in the well-known opera of Don Giovanni. Byron's poem, as you may, does terminate rather abruptly. But its abruptness is colossal.

L. H. H.—It would be difficult to mention the Great Events of History, remembering the motto from Terence *Quot homines tot sententiae*. What one man thinks a great event another will not. Mr. Wills of the Lyceum supposes Charles the First to be a royal martyr, and condemns Cromwell, but that the latter was the true man, notwithstanding his manifold faults, all history will assert. We should divide English History into periods, logically constructed, and arrange them somewhat after this method. 1. Occupation of England by the Romans. 2. The Norman Conquest, continuing through the times of the Plantagenets and implying the feudal domination. 3. The Wars of the Roses, which broke the power of the aristocratic houses and paved the way for the rise of the middle class under Henry the Seventh. 4. Puritanism, which in effect was political as well as religious, and which gave the first high impulse towards the liberty of the meanest subject. We express no opinion on the respectable side of this narrowest of all narrow creeds—men who would condemn dancing and all graceful geniality; but politically they changed to be of material service. They were to a great extent the fathers of our popular liberties. 5. The Revolution of 1688 and the rise of what are called the Great Whig Houses. 6. The extinction of such an element partially in 1831, and wholly in 1867. Battles and sieges appear somewhat small when compared with the social welfare of the people. If, however, you want mere lists of battles from Agincourt to Waterloo any ordinary date book will meet your desires.

LEARN TO FORGET.

If you'd see me gay and happy,
Bright and merry as of old,
Eyes as sparkling, voice as cheery,
As when first your love was told,
You must teach me first a lesson
I have never learned as yet.
If you'd see me gay and happy
Teach, oh! teach me, to forget!

I remember when a mother
Soothed my head upon her breast,
When a brother's arms were round me,
And my life was sheltered, blest;
Now they sleep beneath the daisies,
I have little left me—yet
Sad memory lingers with me,
And the past I can't forget.

I had friends to cluster round me,
Fancied they were fond and true;
Did not think they ere could fail me—
Some have proved as false as you.

As I've watched the eyes grow colder
How I've wished we had not met;
If you'd see my former gladness
Teach me these things—to forget!

'Tis no wonder I am weary,
Life has been so full of woe,
All that I have borne with patience
None but Heaven and angels know;
But cares shadow all earth's brightness,
And, till life's sun has set,
I shall never learn the lesson
You would teach me—to forget. M. L. C.

W. J. C.—Catalysis is a name given to a class of phenomena of which very little is known. It means action by contact, or chemical action taking place in the presence of a substance which appears perfectly inert and unaffected by anything present. As example, we may mention the conversion of starch into sugar in contact with warm dilute acids, the conversion of cane into grape sugar under similar circumstances, the phenomena of fermentation, the action of finely divided metals in decomposing peroxide of hydrogen, and the effect of spongy platinum in inducing the combination of oxygen and hydrogen. Several explanations have been attempted, but they are all more or less obscure, and fail to meet the majority of instances in which the action is observed.

IVY BRANCH, medium height, good figure, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be not under thirty, loving, and fond of home.

W. C. C., twenty-four, 5ft. 6in., a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be medium height, fair, loving, domesticated, and about the same age.

WILLIE H. B., twenty, tall, fair, eyes hazel, dark brown hair, would like to correspond with a young lady about sixteen or seventeen, pretty, and loving.

LAUGHING LIZZIE, dark eyes, light hair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be dark, and about middle height.

J. C. C., twenty-two, fair complexion, and in the Navy, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty, and would prefer one living out of a sea-port town.

MOSS ROSE, eighteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, and considered good looking, would like to correspond with a tradesman's son.

BEN, twenty-one, a mechanic, 5ft. 10in., black hair and eyes, considered handsome, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be tall, fair, affectionate, about nineteen, and domesticated.

JENNIE B., twenty, brown hair and eyes, rather tall, domesticated, and of a loving disposition, considered pretty. Respondent must be a sailor, or a respectable mechanic, fair, good looking, and fond of home.

MAY, nineteen, a nursery governess, dark hair and eyes, considered pretty, musical, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-two, and a clerk preferred.

JENNIE A., twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, considered handsome, of a very loving disposition and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, and fond of home.

CHARLES (Sheffield), twenty-three, tall, dark, black hair, loving disposition, and a small income. Respondent must be about twenty-one, medium height, good-tempered, and loving.

EDGAR H., twenty-six, tall, dark, affectionate, good

tempered, and fond of home, and possesses an income of 500*l.* a year. Respondent must not be more than twenty-two, fair, tall, pretty, and domesticated.

MAGNET AND EZZA, brunettes and blonde, both tall, twenty-two, domesticated, industrious, and accustomed to business, would like to correspond with any gentleman who is tall and dark, and in a good position.

CHARLES H., twenty-two, medium height, dark, kind and loving, and a partner in a good business. Respondent must be good looking, affectionate, and about the same age, having also about 500*l.* at her command.

HARVEY, nineteen, tall, dark complexion, affectionate, and fond of music and dancing. Respondent must be about twenty-one, rather tall, loving, fond of home, and a tradesman's son.

THOMAS, thirty, fair, good looking, a tradesman, and a widower. Respondent must be affectionate, domesticated, and must possess a little money, which might be settled upon herself.

FOUR ROYAL, twenty, 5ft. 7in., in the Royal Navy, fair complexion, light hair, blue eyes, loving, and would make a good husband. Respondent must be about eighteen, pretty, well educated, fond of home and thoroughly domesticated.

TOPSAIL SHEET BLOCK, thirty-four, 5ft. 10in., rather stout, good looking, and in the merchant service. Respondent must be about twenty-five, a brunette, domesticated, good tempered, respectably connected, and with a little money.

ROSE (Liverpool), twenty-two, under medium height, dark hair and eyes, handsome and accomplished, will make a good husband comfortable. Respondent should be under thirty, fair, affectionate, strictly temperate, and a tradesman preferred.

HAMMOCK LASHING, twenty-three, 5ft. 4in., fair, hazel eyes, light-brown hair and moustache, loving and domesticated, and in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about eighteen, fair, loving, domesticated, and fond of home and children.

ALFRED D., twenty-two, fair hair, blue eyes, and considered handsome, a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about twenty, loving, fond of home and children; a housemaid preferred.

JOHN JACKSON McW., twenty-two, handsome, and having an income of 200*l.* a year, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-one, who must be good looking, and of a respectable family. Must belong to Belfast, or the north of Ireland.

ELGIVA AND LENA. "Elgiva," twenty-five, medium height, dark hair and eyes; "Lena," twenty, medium height, light hair and dark eyes, both domestic servants, would like to correspond with two sailors, mates of merchant ships preferred; must be affectionate and fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JERRY W., BAMB, and THOMAS J., responded to by "The Three Graces," sisters, twenty, twenty-three, and twenty-five, respectively, fair, pretty, affectionate, and domesticated.

S. A. W., by—"F. L. F.," twenty-one, medium height, dark, and a mechanic. J. J., by—"Annie," who answers in every way to his description.

ERMINA Z., by—"York," twenty-four, 5ft. 11in., a carpenter, and thinks he is all the lady requires. A. V. C., by—"Edith Marie Harcourt," eighteen, tall, fair, brown hair and eyes, loving, and fond of home.

LOVELY LOTTIE, by—"Happy Jack," twenty-three, seaman, tall, dark, and considered good looking.

DICK W., by—"Becky G.," nineteen, pretty, domesticated, and would make a loving wife. FRANK A., by—"Hope," who is good looking and loving, and able to keep a home comfortable.

GIFT Q., by—"Idris Aroon," a captain in the Army, thirty-two, 5ft. 11in., who thinks he would suit her.

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